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Stress and Coping Strategies Among Minnesota Secondary School Principals

Trish M. Perry

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Stress and Coping Strategies Among Minnesota Secondary School Principals

by

Trish Perry

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of

St. Cloud State University

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Dissertation Committee:
Dr. John Eller, Chairperson
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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine stress and coping factors of select Minnesota secondary school principals. The study also intended to examine differences in job stresses experienced by male and female secondary school principals, strategies employed by select Minnesota secondary school principals to cope with job stresses, varied strategies used to cope with job stresses employed by male and female secondary school principals in Minnesota, and the manner in which job stresses of select Minnesota secondary school principals change as a function of position longevity.

It is imperative to examine stressors in the lives of administrators and the strategies used to cope with those stresses. If those stressors are not examined and addressed, stressors may well lead to personal suffering and job ineffectiveness (Vanderpol, 1981). [A] substantial amount of research indicates that principals experience a high level of stress due to the variety of tasks performed in their diverse roles (Whitaker, 1996). High levels of stress can lead to burnout which, in turn, can lead to emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced feelings of personal accomplishment (Maslach and Jackson, 1986).

According to the research, principals must be able to establish clear lines of authority, clear job descriptions, realistic system wide goals and objectives, have training in conflict resolution, and be able to organize personal support groups (Kottkamp and Mansfield, 1985). Understanding the role of the principal and the stress that he or she faces diminishes the likelihood of principal burnout.

The research design employed quantitative methods. Study data were gathered through the use of the Administrative Stress Index (ASI) survey developed by Walter Gmelch and Boyd Swent. The study's sample group was identified from among members listed on the membership database of the Minnesota Association of Secondary School Principals (MASSP). Study data were collected using SurveyMonkey.

Data from 200 principals were analyzed to examine stresses and coping strategies reported by select Minnesota secondary school principals. Using analysis of variance calculations, demographic variables, stress factors and coping strategies were analyzed to determine statistically significant relationships.

Statistics were analyzed to determine the mean value of the respondents' answers to the 35 work related situations that were sources of concern. The researcher used the framework of Gmelch and Gate (1998), which identified four causes of stress: role-based, task-based, boundary spanning, and conflict mediating stress. The researcher categorized the 35 work-related situations in the ASI into one of Gmelch and Gate's categories. In addition, information was gathered from an open-ended question about sources of concern of job stresses experienced by principal respondents.

Findings from the study reported, that overall, principals were rarely bothered by the work-related situations as identified by the Administrative Stress Index. However, the research literature does suggest that principals face large amounts of stress, and it is imperative they develop strategies to cope with stressful situations. Effective coping strategies aid principals in avoiding emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment; this in turn will reduce burnout and maintain efficacy on a professional organizational manner.

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The completion of this dissertation has truly been a journey. Throughout this journey, there are many people to whom I express my greatest gratitude. Because of your endless support, this dissertation has become a reality.

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Finally, thank you to my husband, David Schneider, who has spent countless hours listening to my research, providing encouragement, and support throughout this journey. I am very thankful for your endless love and support.

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my family, who has supported me from the beginning of this journey to the end. Jim Johnson who has been a constant support to me throughout the completion of this project. To Jim- thank you for all the time, conversation, and guidance. You have become a true friend. You were always there to provide encouragement when I needed it most.

I also dedicate this to all my students that I have had the opportunity to work with—always believe in yourself and nothing is impossible! You are my inspiration!

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Chapter I: INTRODUCTION

The Role of Principal

This study sought to find the level of stress Minnesota principals report and the coping strategies used to address job-related stress. To best understand job-related stress, it is important to research the complexities of the principalship (Lunenburg, 2010). The role of the principal includes leadership functions, administrative roles, management skills, task dimensions, human resource activities, as well as profiles of both effective and ineffective principals (Lunenburg, 2010).

Wells (2013) asserted that the role of the principal has shifted from primarily addressing managerial issues to instructional and transformational leadership issues. In that regard, principals are less authoritative than they were in the past and are discovering they are expected to be more democratic and diplomatic (Vanderpol, 1981). According to Sachs and Blackmore (1984), administrators are required to cope with multiple demands created by external pressures and to be more efficient, effective, and economic in how they go about their work. Principals must lead innovation, seek improvement, and implement reform movements, while at the same time preparing students for the 21st Century (Wells, 2013).

Principals are responsible for overseeing the education of all students. Andrews and Soder (1987) defined the principal as an instructional leader who seeks continual improvement of instructional programs and participates in staff development with the goal of improving classroom environments that will enhance student learning. At the same time, principals are still accountable for all decisions in their schools and face scrutiny by school committees and parents for unpopular decisions (Vanderpol, 1981).

Previous expectations of principals were that they should operate a smooth, functioning school and be responsive to all; society now expects principals to produce improved test results and lead a learning organization (Fullan, 2001). Consequently, due to the multiple demands administrators experience on a daily basis, stress may be considered a chronic fact of life, as well as an occupational hazard (Vanderpol, 1981). In a 2008 report from the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, it was revealed that the increasing demands placed on principals lead to greater stress. It was reported that 35% of the 415,000 education administrators in the United States worked more than 40 hours per week (United States Bureau of Labor, 2008). According to Sogunro (2012), principals work year around, supervise activities at night and on weekends, navigate changes in school structure and demographics, address new policies, maintain deadlines for attaining educational goals, understand socioeconomic issues, school violence, and environmental disasters. These challenges can be stressful, and the stress impacts principals because they are responsible for the education of all students under their watch (Sogunro, 2012)

Conceptual Framework

This research study is intended to identify stress and subsequent coping factors experienced by select Minnesota secondary school principals. Brimm (2001) defined stress as any action or situation that places physical or psychological demands on individuals. Situational stress accounts for a large amount of administrative stress (Brimm, 2001), and a high level of stress and role overload may cause burnout (Whitaker, 1995). Burnout may be defined as a syndrome of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and a reduced sense of accomplishment (Maslach and Jackson, 1986).

Tomic and Tomic (2008) asserted that organizational rules and policies, excessive by high self- imposed expectations, feelings of having too heavy of a workload, increasing

demands, role ambiguity, lack of recognition and rewards, and decreasing autonomy are factors that lead to burnout. Sogunro (2012) cited the work of Trenberth and Dewe (2005) in stating that 89.6% of the principals they studied reported their stress levels were high. Furthermore, Trenberth and Dewe (2005) found that more than 92% of all principals who participated in their study reported the largest sources of stress they experienced resulted from personal conflicts among teachers and between teachers and their principals.

The participants in this study included Minnesota secondary school principals. This study identified if Minnesota secondary school principals are highly stressed as well as the coping strategies used to deal with the amount of stress they experienced. This research further advances the study of principal stress as well as coping factors used to cope with stress that principals experience.

Statement of the Problem

According to Sogunro (2012), principals encounter more stress in today's schools than they have in the past. This stress occurs daily and builds and impacts both principals' jobs and personal lives (Sogunro, 2012). Due to limited information available about the stresses experienced by principals and the strategies they use to cope with stress, further research would be warranted.

It is imperative to examine stressors in the lives of administrators and identify strategies to cope with these stressors. If these stressors are not examined and addressed, they may well lead to personal suffering and job ineffectiveness (Vanderpol, 1981). If this stress is not managed, it may create administrator burnout and cause concomitant high cost to the school organization. Stress may result in complaints about work, dissatisfaction on the job with co-workers and growth opportunities, the desire for isolation, misdirected anger targeted at a spouse

and children, insomnia, increased alcohol and drug consumption, physical illness, absenteeism, and job turnover (Kottkamp and Mansfield, 1985). Brimm (2001) defined stress as any action or situation that places physical or psychological demands on individuals.

This research study is intended to identify stressors and subsequent coping factors as reported by select Minnesota secondary school principals

Significance of the Study

Situational stress accounts for a significant amount of administrative stress (Brimm, 2001). A high level of stress and role overload may cause burnout (Whitaker, 1995). Burnout may be defined as a syndrome of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and a reduced sense of accomplishment (Maslach and Jackson, 1986). Tomic and Tomic (2008) asserted that organizational rules and policies, excessive high, self-imposed expectations, feelings of having too heavy of a workload, increasing demands, role ambiguity, lack of recognition and rewards, and decreasing autonomy are factors that lead to burnout. Sogunro (2012) cited the work of Trenberth and Dewe (2005), stating that 89.6% of the principals they studied reported their stress levels were high. Furthermore, Trenberth and Dewe (2005) found that more than 92% of all principals who participated in their study reported the largest sources of stress they experienced resulted from personal conflicts among teachers and between teachers and their principals.

The participants in this study include Minnesota secondary school principals. The research conducted in this study is to identify if Minnesota secondary school principals are highly stressed, and strategies they use to address the amount of stress they experience. This research advances the study of principal stress as well as coping strategies used by principals to cope with stress.

According to Sogunro (2012), principals encounter more stress in today's schools than they have in the past. This stress occurs daily and builds and impacts both principals' jobs and personal lives (Sogunro, 2012). Due to limited information available about the stresses experienced by principals and the strategies they use to cope with stress, further research appears warranted.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to examine stresses and coping strategies reported by select Minnesota secondary school principals. Effective principals lead effective schools, yet burnout can impact the organization and an administrator's leadership abilities. It is believed valuable to identify the sources of stress and coping strategies, in part, because of the changing role of the principals. To recognize the influence/s of coping strategies is to reduce burnout and in turn maintain efficacy on a professional organizational manner.

Research Questions

In order to address the research problem identified earlier, the following research questions have been developed:

1. What are the major sources of job stress reported by select Minnesota secondary school principals?
2. What are differences in the job stresses experienced by male and female secondary school principals in Minnesota?
3. What are the strategies employed by select Minnesota secondary school principals to cope with job stresses?
4. What are the differences in strategies employed by male and female secondary school principals in Minnesota to cope with job stresses?

5. How do job stresses of select Minnesota secondary school principals change as a function of position longevity?

Assumptions of the Study

Leedy and Ormond (2010) stated, “Assumptions are so basic that without them, the research problem itself could not exist (p.6).” Assumptions are matters that are beyond the researchers control, but are necessary for your study to be relevant (Simon, 2011). The following were identified as assumptions in the study:

1. Due to the respondents’ anonymity and the confidentiality of their data, all participants will respond to the survey honestly.
2. All participants will have experienced some level of job stress.

Delimitations

Delimitations are boundaries in a study that have been established by the researcher (Roberts, 2010). Delimitations are controlled by the researcher (Roberts, 2010). Delimiting factors include the choice of problem, purpose statement, criteria, geographic region, and profession included in study (Roberts, 2010). The following are delimitations of the study:

1. The survey sample included only Minnesota secondary school principals. This is a delimitation selected by the researcher because of the geographic accessibility of the respondents.
2. The sample is comprised of Minnesota secondary school principals and may not reflect a viewpoint that is representative of secondary school principals in other geographical locations.
3. Data were collected through a survey instrument, which respondent principals may or may not choose to answer completely.

Definition of Terms

The following terms are defined to aid the reader:

Secondary school principal: A head or lead principal of a school that includes any or all grades

7-12. Examples of school configurations served by secondary school principals include, but are not limited to, grades 9-12, 6-8, K-12, 7-12 (Swaggert, 2011).

Stress: An individual's physiological and psychological response to situations that approach or exceed a person's perceived coping resources (Hiebert and Mendaglio, 1988).

Burnout: A syndrome of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced sense of accomplishment (Maslach and Jackson, 1986).

Emotional Exhaustion: Feelings of being emotionally overextended and drained by one's contact with people (Maslach and Jackson, 1986).

Depersonalization: Unfeeling and uncaring responses toward people (Maslach and Jackson, 1986).

Personal accomplishment: Feelings of competence and successful achievement in one's work with people (Maslach and Jackson, 1986).

Organization of the Study

The study is presented in five chapters. Chapter one includes an introduction to the study, conceptual framework, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research questions, research definitions, assumptions of the study, delimitations, definition of terms, and organization of the study. Chapter two includes a review of literature relating to the topic of administrative job stress and coping strategies. Chapter three presents the methodology of the study including the research questions, research methodology, pilot testing, population, data collection and analysis, and study limitations. Chapter four delineates the findings of the study.

Chapter five presents the study's summary, conclusions, recommendations, and suggestions for further research.

Chapter II: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present a review of literature relevant to principal burnout, factors that lead to principal burnout, principal gender and burnout, and principal coping strategies to diminish feelings of burnout. Understanding the stress that principals face, how stress impacts the principal's ability to be effective in school leadership, and the role the principal plays in the school organization is important to study (Wax and Hales, 1984). Sections of the chapter include:

- definitions, causes and implications of stress,
- common myths about stress,
- definitions, causes, and impacts of burnout;
- definitions, causes, and impacts of burnout;
- factors that lead to burnout, gender and stress;
- health and stress;
- and coping strategies (psychological/mental health, professional training programs, and mentoring programs).

Definitions, Causes and Impact of Stress

Stress may be defined as “an individual's physiological and psychological response to situations that approach or exceed a person's perceived coping resources” (Hiebert and Mendaglio, 1988, p.3. Gmelch (1991) added that ‘stress’ is a generic term for an entire area of problems that include the stimuli producing stress reactions, the reactions themselves, and the various intervening processes (as cited in Lazarus, 1966, p. 27). Similar to Gmelch (1988), Brimm (2001) viewed stress as any action or situation that places physical or psychological

demands on people. Stress can also be defined as “the intensity and length of time needed to adjust to life’s events” (as cited in Holmes and Rahe, 1967, p. 64). Stress is a nonspecific response pattern that is biochemically the same regardless of the nature of the stressor; which means the body reacts the same if the stressor is pleasant or unpleasant (as cited in Selye, 1974, p. 64). As stated in Kaiser and Polczynski (1982), stress does not cause the body’s reaction—it *is* the body’s reaction.

Situational stress can develop from a conflict in values (Brimm, 2001). It can also arise when a person faces factors in which they have no control over, such as: government requirements, organizational policies, inadequate salaries, and decreased job status (Brimm, 2001). Therefore, situational stress seems to account for a large percentage of administrative stress (Brimm, 2001). Psychological stress, which includes dysfunctional behavior, occurs when principals experience role conflict or when differences exist among groups regarding appropriate principal behavior (Brimm, 2001). It can also exist when a principal experiences role overload: when he/she realizes there is not enough time or energy to do all that is expected (Brimm, 2001). Principals may also experience a lack of role competence when a leader acknowledges his/her lack of expertise and leadership to meet particular demands (Brimm, 2001). However, not all stress is negative.

Eustress (positive stress) is necessary to perform well (Brimm, 2001). When one experiences eustress, he/she feels good and has a sense of achievement (Brimm, 2001). Conversely, distress is a negative stress experienced by an individual who fails to achieve (Brimm, 2001). A state of distress produces feelings of insecurity, helplessness, or desperation (Brimm, 2001). Stress can also be self-imposed, originating within the individual’s unrealistic

and unreasonable demands (Brimm, 2001). Too much stress can harm the body, but a certain amount of stress is necessary for everyone (Kaiser and Polczynski, 1982).

Stress may result from an imbalance between the demands people face and resources for dealing with those demands (Gmelch, 1988). Wax and Hales (1987) found that stress develops when a stressful event occurs. They continued to say that an event is considered stressful if it involves a change in usual activities and, if the event is perceived as stressful by the person experiencing the event. The concept of stress can be associated with anxiety, frustration, strain, conflict and tension (Gmelch, 1991). Individuals develop coping behaviors, which are attempts to deal with the demands of a situation (Hiebert and Mendaglio, 1988). Pressures are demands that lie within a person's coping ability, while stressors are demands that a person may find difficult to cope under (Hiebert and Mendaglio, 1988). Potential stressors could be role ambiguity, need for autonomy, excessive or conflicting job demands, need for independence, need for self-esteem, and high achievement motivation (Wax and Hales, 1987).

Walter Gmelch (1988) defined four stages of stress: cause, reaction, coping and consequence. The first stage explores the causes of stress. In Gmelch and Gate's (1998) framework they identified four causes of stress: role-based, task-based, boundary spanning, and conflict mediating stress.

- Role-based stress: administrator's beliefs and attitudes about his/her role in the school.
- Task-based stress: the day to day operations of the school which may include staff and telephone interruptions, participating in activities outside of school hours, too heavy of a workload, meetings, writing reports, memos and other communications.

- Boundary spanning stress: develop from outside conditions such as pressure to gain public support.
- Conflict-mediating stress: resolving differences with and between students, parents, and superiors (p. 147).

The second stage is an individual's reaction to stress. Two possible reactions are psychological and physiological (Gmelch, 1988). Psychological reactions may cause heart disease, cancer, arthritis, asthma, or migraine headaches while the body's physiological reactions to stress is nonspecific (Gmelch, 1988). Physiological reactions do not discriminate and send an alarm to all organs of the body producing increased heart rates and sweating palms (Gmelch, 1988). Gmelch (1988) cited the work of the behavioral study conducted by Friedman and Rosenman, 1974. Friedman and Rosenman identified the 'Type A' personality, which tackles work with intensity and impatience. They stated that individuals who possess this type of personality may perceive the work demand extremely stressful, therefore increasing his/her chances of poor health.

The third stage in the model is coping responses and the fourth stage defines the consequences of stress (Gmelch, 1988). There are some stressors that are inherent to the role of the principal: multitasking, accountability, pupil performance, and discipline (Phillips, Sen, and McNamee, 2007). According to Gmelch (1991), there is no, one right way to cope with stress.

Common Myths about Stress

Gmelch (1991) conveyed common myths about stress. The first myth is stress should be avoided (Gmelch, 1991). As previously stated, eustress may be a positive factor in achievement. Stress is a natural part of life and helps individuals respond to threats or rise to certain challenges. Furthermore, there is no way of avoiding stress other than death (Gmelch, 1991).

Another myth is that executives experience the most stress (Gmelch, 1991). The results vary about who in management experiences the most stress. An additional myth is that stress is male dominated (Gmelch, 1991). Men do suffer higher rates of alcoholism, ulcers, lung cancer, suicide, and heart disease than women (Gmelch, 1991). However, as the number of women entering managerial position continues to increase, so do the incidences of stress and stress-related diseases (Gmelch, 1991). Finally, Gmelch (1991) stated it is a myth to believe there is only one right way to cope with stress.

Definitions, Causes and Impact of Burnout

The term “burnout” was first introduced in the late 1960s in the United States (Jackson and Rothmann, 2005). In 1975, Freudenberg originated the term “burnout” which resulted from wearing oneself out in pursuit of an impossible set of expectations (Kottkamp and Mansfield, 1985). Leiter and Maslach (1988) stated burnout as the response to interpersonal stressors on the job, an overload of contact with people which may result in changes of attitude and behavior toward them. Burnout may be defined as a syndrome of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced sense of accomplishment (Maslach and Jackson, 1986). Whitaker (1995) defined burnout as representing high levels of stress and role overload. Isaac Friedman (1997) defined burnout as a multi-stage process. In the first stage, due to an imbalance between resources and demands, a person feels stress. Stage two is a person’s emotional response to the imbalance between resources and demands. The final stage consists of changes in attitudes and behaviors (Friedman, 1997). Further, in 1977, Mattingly said that burnout arises from the conflict between a professional obligation to give of oneself and the realization that he/she can never give enough (as cited in Kottkamp and Mansfield, 1985).

Burnout was first observed and studied as an occupational issue for people working in service professions (Jackson and Rothmann, 2005). However, administrator burnout is different from burnout in other professions. Burnout is associated with those who work with people having problems, which is only in part, what an administrator does (Wax and Hales, 1984). In this regard, the position of a school administrator differs from the positions of other human service professions in terms of the nature of the problems encountered and the degree of direct client contact (Wax and Hales, 1984). In schools, the direct client is the student but also includes staff members and parents (Wax and Hales, 1984). However, Leiter and Maslach (1988) stated that interactions with co-workers are the most important sources of job stress and burnout. Contact with co-workers can be a major source of distress, frustration, and conflict in human service professions (Leiter and Maslach, 1988). In addition to Leiter and Maslach, Kottkamp and Mansfield (1985) conveyed that burnout results from the stress that service professionals experience in their close and continuing encounters with their clients and the problems of the clients they serve (1985).

Okoroma and Okah (2007) cited economic, social, and political factors as stress inducers, regardless of geographical boundaries. Friedman (1997) cited Cherniss and Hallstein (1993) who believe environmental stressors are the key contributing factors to burnout. For an individual, the results of environmental stress may lead to a personal and professional sense of non-accomplishment which may lead to exhaustion, depersonalization, and the desire to leave the profession (Friedman, 1997). Leiter and Maslach (1988) also suggested that environmental factors are more strongly related to burnout than personal factors, such as demographic and personality variables. In contrast, Gmelch (1988) stated that burnout is best predicted by overall

high work stress, dissatisfaction with status and recognition, and dissatisfaction with interpersonal relationships.

In addition to economic, social and political factors, burnout may be associated with a variety of factors. For example, burnout is associated with higher levels of education (Maslach, Leiter, and Jackson, 1996). However, most stress-related problems, different from burnout, are more prevalent among workers with low status and poor education (Fletcher, 1988). Single people have an increased risk of burnout (Jackson and Rothmann, 2005). A partner who provides social support may alleviate the feelings of burnout (Jackson and Rothmann, 2005). Burnout may impact young employees aged 30 or 40 who have relatively little work experience (Jackson and Rothmann, 2005). Sarros (1988) continued by saying there is no significant difference in burnout of administrators classified by the total number of years as an educator and the number of years of administrative experience. In European countries, burnout is more prevalent among older age groups because they are more reluctant to change jobs because of cultural values and social security systems (Jackson and Rothmann, 2005).

According to Carolyn Wells (2013), the job of the principal is “a job too big for one person.” Wells (2013) cited the work of Williamson and Campbell (1987) who suggested the four major stressors of the principalship were: management of time, relations with supervisors, relations with subordinates, and matters of finance. She also cited the work of Bailey, Fillos, and Kelly (1987), who believed the top stressors for principals were: resolving school conflict, making important decisions that affect the lives of others, and compliance with state and federal mandates. Whitaker (1995) further suggested that: role conflict and ambiguity, increased workload, insufficient status, recognition within the organization, and lack of job challenges were also predictors of burnout. Additionally, Tomic and Tomic (2008) agreed that

organizational rules and policies, excessive high self-imposed expectations, feelings of having too heavy of a workload, increasing demands, role ambiguity, lack of recognition and rewards, and decreasing autonomy are factors that lead to burnout.

Heibert and Mendaglio (1988) identified additional burnout factors including legislated organizational rules, meetings, paperwork, public relations, parent-school conflicts, making decisions that affect lives, staff evaluations, telephone interruptions, forced resignations, preparations for a strike, refusal of teachers to follow policy, and threat of job security as stress factors. In Heibert and Mendaglio's (1988) study, principals cited frequent interruptions by other people or phone calls, supervising/coordinating school activities, keeping up with written communication, having responsibility with insufficient authority, excessive work load, and living up to their own high expectations as stress factors. Similarly, administrators are flooded with daily, unscheduled meetings, frequent interruptions, and petty annoyances (Brimm, 2001). Wells (2013) said that principals listed diminished resources as a primary stress factor.

Factors that exacerbated burnout included: the school environment, teachers' roles, difficulty with parents, personal issues, and criticism from society (Tomic and Tomic, 2008). Anxiety and job tension were related to a perceived lack of authority to carry out assigned responsibilities. Additionally, the feeling that staff members do not understand the goals and expectations of the organization contributed (Brimm, 2001). Principals found the following as moderately stressful factors: evaluating staff members, making school related decisions affecting people's personal lives, resolving interpersonal conflict between teachers, parents, and school or between teachers and principals (Heibert and Mendaglio, 1988). Heibert and Mendaglio (1988) noted that there is little attention given to how the intensity of the demand, an individual's

response to the demand, and the person's skill at meeting the demands impacts the level of stress (Heibert and Mendaglo, 1988).

Friedman (1997) also identified and defined three categories of contributing factors to burnout:

- Task stressors: which affect self-efficacy and involve human resource management issues.
- Organizational stressors: stimulating motivation, cooperation among staff, and dealing with poor employee performance issues.
- Relational stressors: internal and external interpersonal relations (p.5).

In Jackson and Rothmann's (2005) work, they found there is a difference between the level of exhaustion, mental dissonance and professional efficacy experienced by educators in different types of schools. Secondary school principals tend to have a higher level of exhaustion than primary school principals (Jackson and Rothmann, 2005). Jackson and Rothmann (2005) found that educators who considered leaving the profession were more likely to be exhausted and cynical.

Kathryn Whitaker (1996) also explored the causes of principal burnout. The role of the principal is comprised of role conflict, role ambiguity, and role overload (Whitaker, 1996). She stated that principals are frustrated due to work overload and being incapable of accomplishing tasks and responsibilities (Whitaker, 1996). Principals experience a high level of stress due to the variety of tasks performed in their diverse role (Whitaker, 1996). Whitaker (1996) also stated that principals are faced with doing more with less funding. There are greater expectations from the public and central administration regarding higher standards for student achievement (Whitaker, 1996). Additionally, the level of autonomy for principals has changed. As a result of

site-based management, principals involve staff, parents, and community members in decision-making, forcing the principal to satisfactorily please all of these groups (Whitaker, 1996). Not only do principals experience frustrations due to site-based management, they complain of frustrations with central offices and bureaucratic rules (Whitaker, 1996).

In Okoroma and Okah's (2007) work, they cited inadequate funding, inadequate school facilities, work overload, and poor conditions of service as factors that lead to burnout. Okoroma and Okah studied administrative stress in secondary school principals in Rivers State, Nigeria. There, they found that physical danger, job dissatisfaction, promotion problems, job security, poor work relationships, and poor organizational structures were all factors that led to burnout (Okoroma and Okah, 2007). Okoroma and Okah (2007) stated that inadequate motivation may also cause job dissatisfaction. Additionally, Okoroma and Okah (2007), found that stress is a product of work overload and role conflict and that administrators suffer stress due to their refusal to delegate work. According to Brimm (2001), principals have self-imposed stress due to their unrealistic and unreasonable demands they place on themselves. Ironically, they did not find insufficiently trained teachers as a critical contributing factor in administrative stress (Okoroma and Okah, 2007).

Cushing, Kerrins, and Johnstone (2003), said the reason why principals are leaving the principalship is due to too few rewards. Public criticism and demands of high accountability are contributing factors of job stress (Cushing et al. 2003). Principals have a high amount of responsibility and do not have much flexibility due to union contracts (Cushing et al. 2003). Conversely, Kremer-Hayon, Faraj, and Wubbels (2002), identified four elements that lead to burnout: exhaustion, isolation, impatience, dissatisfaction with professional self and colleagues. In their research, they found little burnout among Israeli Arab school principals. The results of

their study showed that Israeli Arab school principals have a relatively low rate of burnout and a high rate of professional identity because of increased social status that the principal gains in their culture (Kremer-Hayon et al., 2002). Principals are respected by parents and by the community (Kremer-Hayon et al., 2002). The increased social status is a source of authority and satisfaction, which may partially lessen the sense of burnout (Kremer-Hayon et al., 2002). The more principals identify with their profession the less likely they will burnout (Kremer-Hayon et al., 2002). Being affiliated with a respected position may result in job satisfaction with his/her work because principals derive great prestige, respect, and high social status (Kremer-Hayon et al., 2002). In addition, the more positive principals' perceptions of interpersonal relationships, the lower their burnout (Kremer-Hayon et al., 2002). A positive atmosphere of cooperation where principals are seen as being friendly, understanding, provide leadership, trust their teachers, and respect their freedom are likely to result in job satisfaction (Kremer-Hayon et al., 2002).

Kremer-Hayon et al. (2002) also concluded there is a low level of burnout among Israeli Arab school principals. Kremer-Hayon et al. (2002) also found Israeli Arab school principals to have a high rate of professional identity. Likewise, the more principals identified with the profession, the less burn out they experience (Kremer-Hayon et al., 2002). The more positive principals' perceptions of interpersonal relationships are the lower their burnout rate (Kremer-Hayon, et al., 2002).

The principalship is a complex profession that demands technical and social skills while at the same time managing a school, staff, parents, and instruction (Ozer, 2013). According to Ozer (2013), principals who work in a smaller school (less than 500 students) are less likely to express feelings of burnout. Principals working in larger schools (over 1000 students) have the

highest level of burnout (Ozer, 2013). In a small school, there are increased opportunities for autonomy, collaboration, and relationships, which makes it possible to redesign and restructure the learning process and the school's organizational practices and policies (Ozer, 2013). In a larger school, there is higher workload for principals, which may weaken their interpersonal communication with all the school stakeholders, including parents and students (Ozer, 2013). It is important to establish close relationships between students and the principal because this may prevent burnout (Ozer, 2013). Trusting relationships are key ingredients of human learning especially in schools where learning is the central focus (Ozer, 2013). Further, even though trusting relationships are key ingredients in dealing with stress, student discipline and allocating resources still remain stressful.

In 2007, Phillips, Sen, and McNamee found that secondary school principals have a higher level of stress when working with student discipline and allocating educational resources. The stressors that were most reported were parents, workload, government initiatives, and time frame for changes (Phillips et al., 2007). They also found that some stressors were inherent to the position, including: multitasking, accountability, pupil performance, and discipline (Phillips et al., 2007). Likewise, Brimm (2001) found participation in school activities outside the normal working hours caused a significant amount of stress for secondary school principals. The principals Brimm (2001) studied found considerable pressure because of excessive paperwork and a workload that could not be accomplished during a normal workday. However, workload reduction is problematic due to limited financial and human resources (Stephenson and Bauer, 2010). All elementary and secondary principals found compliance with rules their most stressful task (Brimm, 2001). Brimm (2001) also found: forced resignations, unsatisfactory performance, preparation for a strike, refusal of teachers to follow policies, threat to job security or status, and

the threat to physical security as stressful events for both elementary and secondary administrators.

Daniel L. Duke (1988) studied four principals for one year. The principals studied, primarily complained of the following:

- feeling frustration with central office and bureaucratic rules;
- feeling fatigued from the endless demands of the job;
- feeling drained by competing demands and pressure from high expectations; and
- feeling their achievements only brought more work (Duke, 1988).

As Duke analyzed his work, he found there were major dissatisfactions with the job itself, and specifically with the supervisor relationship (Duke, 1988). Duke identified a variety of role concerns:

- all the things that principals are expected to do;
- the mundane and boring nature of the work;
- and the expressed tendency for managerial concerns to supersede leadership functions (Duke, 1988).

The principals that Duke studied all considered quitting. From Duke's interviews, he found four themes. The first was fatigue. Principals work long hours and have hundreds of human interactions each day. Principals are expected to attend evening meetings as well as feel the pressure to meet impossible deadlines (Duke, 1988). Also, causing principals to feel fatigue is the burden of handling other people's problems (Duke, 1988). Second, the theme of self-awareness and how perfectionism affects the principal. All the principals studied wanted to perform their jobs at a superior level, even at the expense of their personal lives. The third theme was sense of career. The principals felt "place bound" or having limited opportunities (Duke,

1988). Fourth, Duke found that principals were prepared for the technical aspects of the job, but unprepared for the certain aspects of principal work that produce—simultaneously—satisfaction, concern and frustration (Duke, 1988).

Duke's study also revealed that all the principals commented, at various times, that the work was more challenging, more difficult, more routine, and more boring than expected (Duke, 1988). Some of the principals also shared that the problems they faced were more a function of their personality rather than the job (Duke, 1988). The function of the personality they faced was perfectionism. Factors really important to these principals were: their need to achieve, their personal desire to be liked, commitment to change, insistence on balancing personal and professional life, and their willingness to be self-critical and a perfectionist (Duke, 1988). The comments from the principals were clear regarding the need for principal's autonomy and support from supervisors (Duke, 1988). Whitaker (1995) also suggested the need for principal's autonomy. She explained that the principal's autonomy is decreasing due to collaborative decision-making models: the need to make decisions involving staff, parents, and community. This decision-making model has left principals feeling powerless and vulnerable (Whitaker, 1995).

Burnout is not only difficult personally (psychologically and physiologically), but it also weighs on the organization (Oplatka, 2002). According to Oplatka (2002), burnout is a difficult experience for the individual and has a high cost to the organization. Burnout may cause less job and career commitment, which may lead to turnover (Oplatka, 2002). Principals provide the vision and energy for change and growth in their organization (Wells, 2013). They must continue to deepen their knowledge base while creating an environment focused on continuous learning (Crow, 2006). Principals are faced with varying student demographics, student mobility, at-risk

conditions, and socioeconomics, which create differing clientele of students and parents (Crow, 2006). Being faced with public scrutiny only adds to the complexity of the position because principals also need to be entrepreneurial, focused on student outcomes and instructional processes, and be connected with their communities (Crow, 2006).

The consequences for burnout are serious and can lead to exhaustion, cynicism, and reduced sense of self-efficacy (Wells, 2013). Thus, emotional exhaustion and personal accomplishment are linked to job performance, and job performance is also linked to: positive health, effective coping, job challenges, stress, role conflict and job satisfaction (Gmelch and Gates, 1997). Whitaker (2005) concurred that burnout may affect an individual's personal and professional life negatively and lead to emotional exhaustion.

A component of burnout is emotional exhaustion, which is defined as feelings of being emotionally overextended and drained by extended contact with people (Maslach and Jackson, 1986). Stressful interactions with supervisors may increase the workers' feelings of emotional exhaustion (Leiter and Maslach, 1988). Emotional exhaustion is more prevalent in a negative interpersonal work environment (Leiter and Maslach, 1988). A high level of negativity in the work environment can lead to depersonalization, unless workers have frequent supportive contact with their co-workers (Leiter and Maslach, 1988). Co-worker contact can help workers cope with extreme stressors. Principals between the ages of 35-44 report a higher rate of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization than any other age group (Whitaker, 1995). This could be because principals may experience "plateauing" or feelings of routine and sameness in their positions (Whitaker, 1995). Also, it is important to look at the adult stage of development where principals are experiencing a mid-life transition with increased family responsibilities (Whitaker, 1995). Whitaker (1996) stated emotional exhaustion is a significant problem as

principal's face increasing demands and responsibilities. For example, principals are expected to be instructional leaders, implement changes, and complete management tasks of the position simultaneously (Whitaker, 1996). Feelings of emotional exhaustion may also lead to feelings of depersonalization.

Depersonalization is unfeeling and uncaring responses toward people (Maslach and Jackson, 1986). In addition, Kottkamp and Mansfield (1985) defined depersonalization as the development of a negative and cynical attitude toward clients, and a way to distance oneself from clients whose problems may be seen as stressful. As depersonalization persists, the workers' feeling of accomplishment in their work diminishes (Leiter and Maslach, 1988). Clearly, emotional exhaustion can cause people to focus on the situation and detach from the people involved, a depersonalized response (Torelli, 1993). Depersonalization can also cause feelings of less energy, which may lead to feeling less successful and accomplished (Torelli, 1993).

Gmelch and Gates (1998) explain that job ambiguity can also be a factor in depersonalization and personal accomplishment. Administrators must understand what is expected of them, how much authority they have, be exposed to clear goals, and understand what needs to be done (Gmelch and Gates, 1998). Kottkamp and Mansfield (1985) concluded that chronic role conflict and ambiguity are demoralizing and tension provoking; they may result in a loss of self-esteem causing anxiety, confusion, and indecision. The lack of role clarity and the new roles that principals perform related to site-based management and shared-decision making may also cause feelings of depersonalization (Whitaker, 1995). There may be a lack of clear guidelines about who makes what kinds of decisions (Whitaker, 1995). Gmelch and Gates (1998) believed that support from supervisors is critical especially in helping to reduce the feelings of role conflict, ambiguity and establishing feelings of accomplishment.

Reduced personal accomplishment is a decline in feelings of competence and successful achievement in working with people (Maslach and Jackson, 1986). Burnout can lead to employees less committed to the organization and who are more likely to quit their jobs (Leiter and Maslach, 1988). Employees may be less enthusiastic and accepting of the organization's goals and less dedicated to achieving them, causing withdrawal (Leiter and Maslach, 1988). Whitaker (1997) stated the need for more intrinsic and extrinsic rewards as well as more recognition. This type of reinforcement makes individuals want to work harder to prove themselves. As a result of the principal's changing roles and increased expectations of work, principals may feel a sense of isolation (Wells, 2013). New principals report a strong sense of isolation, and these feelings of isolation increase when the principal receives little feedback from his/her supervisors (Lashway, 2003). Although principals may experience a reduced sense of accomplishment, feelings of burnout may not be a terminal state of being.

Maslach and Jackson (1979) cautioned that professionals may experience burnout, but burnout is not a terminal state of being. Likewise, the phases of burnout (emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and a reduced sense of accomplishment) are independent of each other (Maslach and Jackson, 1979). For example, a professional may experience emotional exhaustion but not a reduced sense of personal accomplishment. However, a professional may experience *all* phases (emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and a reduced sense of accomplishment) of burnout at the same time (Maslach and Jackson, 1979). Torelli (1993) added that administrator burnout may often occur when engaging in stressful situations and coping with these situations.

Gender and Stress

Perceptions and Responses

Torelli and Gmelch (1993) stated that gender differences can influence and affect interaction between stages of the stress cycle (cause, reaction, coping, and consequence). Gender may affect an individual's perceptions of stressors and create different responses (Torelli and Gmelch, 1993). Torelli and Gmelch cited research from Arkkelin and Simmons (1985), stating that the subjects they studied responded more favorably to feminine (expressive, alliance producing, tender, understanding, and accommodating) traits and less favorably to masculine (aggressive, productive, and risk taking) traits. However, within managers, subjects viewed perceived masculine traits more desirable than feminine traits.

According to Sarros (1988), the following characteristics have shown that males are less satisfied with their work: spending 16 or more years in their current position, males who have changed jobs entirely, have a low desire for promotion, and feel there are limited opportunities for promotion. Torelli and Gmelch (1993) spoke to the importance of androgynous characteristics. Androgynous characteristics are traits that have no gender value. Principals need to be able to perform sex-reversed activities: tender and dominant, compassionate and forceful, follower and leader (Torelli and Gmelch, 1993). If a principal possesses androgynous characteristics, he/she shows greater adaptability across situations. Torelli and Gmelch (1993) said principals who are classified as androgynous are in command of basic facts and balanced learning habits, quick thinking, creativity, and social skills. They tend to have higher self-esteem and increased flexibility (Torelli and Gmelch, 1993). These androgynous leaders are effective leaders who use appropriate leadership styles for a given situation (Torelli and Gmelch, 1993).

In 1998, Linda Chisholm conducted a study based on 16 men and women in senior level management positions in the South Africa Gauteng Department of Education. The department of education was created to promote greater gender equity in administrative structures and at leadership levels. She conducted interviews with eight women and eight men regarding three areas: difficulties experienced at work specifically related to gender and race, institutional culture, and individual responses and coping mechanisms. In South Africa, women dominated the education profession but not in leadership and management positions (Chisholm, 2001).

In South Africa, 'good leadership' was white, male, middle class, and heterosexual (Chisholm, 2001). Conversely, women struggled to have their authority accepted once appointed to the position. Both black and white women felt that race and gender was at the base of perceived lack of confidence in their leadership skills (Chisholm, 2001). Additionally, women felt that the lack of visibility and recognition were key issues for them (Chisholm, 2001). The women also reported that domestic responsibilities interrupted their participation in public life and compromised their ability to have a leadership role. At the time of the study, it was rare that men took responsibility for childcare or other domestic responsibilities (Chisholm, 2001). Black men believed that a priority should be improving the gender balance in the department and white men felt women should acquire more important responsibilities and noted the importance of addressing sexism (Chisholm, 2001). In her study, Oplatka studied the life stories of six women administrators who all experienced different aspects of burnout. Oplatka (2002) reported that women tended to present a higher mean of burnout levels. Oplatka (2002) found that this tended to be related to women's lesser control over the work environment and the denial of their own needs when trying to satisfy the needs of others. Also, Oplatka mentioned the conflict of work and family (Oplatka, 2002). Women that Oplatka studied reported more physical symptoms than

men and were less likely to cope with emotional exhaustion by depersonalization (Oplatka, 2002). Oplatka (2002) concluded burnout was associated with negative organizational outcomes and various types of personal dysfunction. Overall, the feelings of burnout resulted in mental and health problems, deterioration of social and family relationships, higher level of job dissatisfaction, and the intent to leave the profession (Oplatka, 2002).

Even though Oplatka's study proved all subjects experienced different aspects of burnout, each held positive attitudes toward others and strived to implement change in their school (2002). Each of the women described that they were in a state of emotional and physical fatigue. Nonetheless, the women maintained positive attitudes with school staff and even though they felt fatigued were still able to adopt innovative projects (Oplatka, 2002). The women felt committed to strive for improvements in their schools. They felt high levels of job satisfaction, which is inconsistent of feelings of burnout. Oplatka (2002) concluded that women in her study interpreted burnout differently than males. The women stressed the significance of social and interpersonal relationships among staff (Oplatka, 2002). Within their leadership style, the women placed caring for staff, students, and instructional issues with great value (Oplatka, 2002). The women believed burnout is not an absolute or total experience.

Phillips et al. (2007) reported women have higher amounts of stress than men. This could be because women have a greater willingness to declare stress due to the increased work and life balance that women face (Phillips et al., 2007). Women play a major role in child care and domestic arrangements (Phillips et al., 2007). Due to changes to legislation or new legislation, women felt a greater amount of stress than men. (Phillips et al., 2007). Student performance, acting as a buffer, interpersonal problems with others on the management team, allocating resources, and inadequate management training caused greater feelings of stress to women than

men (Phillips et al., 2007). Females were significantly more stressed than males by work overload and issues of control. According to Gmelch (1991), women reported less stress than men with the exception of task-based stress.

In Fennell's (1997) work, she stated that images of powerful women might receive a negative response from both males and females because of the lens through which western socialization views women. Fennell (1997) also believed that all images are not negative. When women use power in socially acceptable ways, such as: responsibility, nurturing, and power expressed through positive relationships, women are accepted as making positive contributions to the world of work and society. Women use emotional energy and have the ability to keep the needs of others in mind while planning and decision-making (Fennell, 1997). Even though these factors helped women to be successful historically, these same factors have been identified as preventing women from being successful, as detailed in the next paragraph.

Expectations and Unwritten Rules

During the years of 1995 thru 1997 data was collected in Queensland, Australia for a project conducted on the topic of women and educational leadership. The goal of the project was to identify factors that prevent women from being successful in organizational cultures (Sachs and Blackmore, 1998). The project also examined the factors in place that encourage women to apply for formal leadership positions (Sachs and Blackmore, 1998). The women in this study reported that the expectations of the community made their job more difficult (Sachs and Blackmore, 1998). Reportedly, women faced sexist attitudes in both the way they were expected to behave and the way in which they were treated (Sachs and Blackmore, 1998). The report concluded that women are viewed as emotional, while men are viewed to be rational.

In leadership positions, there are unwritten rules: women are expected to be compassionate, empathetic, and understanding with students and staff (Sachs and Blackmore, 1998). Women also have to follow unwritten rules regarding the handling of their feelings and professionalism (Sachs and Blackmore, 1998). Women's feelings of pain, despair, and uncertainty are disguised because they fear such emotions interfere with professional relationships (Sachs and Blackmore, 1998). Regarding detachment, women reported that being in control of their feelings and emotions are important if they want to be taken seriously in their position and be rewarded with a promotion (Sachs and Blackmore, 1998). "Being collegial can place considerable demands on women; women have to balance the issues of confidentiality with open and collegial ways of communicating with their staff (Sachs and Blackmore, 1998 p. 274)."

On the contrary, Greenglass, Burke, and Ondrack (1990) found men experienced greater work stress than women, causing men increased feelings of depersonalization. Greenglass et al. (1990) found that men experienced greater stress because they are less likely to use coping techniques such as quality of daily life, investment in friends, and daily cultural activities to reduce stress. However, women were more successful in using coping strategies to reduce the feelings of burnout (Greenglass et al., 1990).

Coping Differences

The relationship between work stress and burnout differed between women and men (Greenglass et al., 1990). Women handled stress and burnout by having a support network of family, friends, and spouse (Greenglass et al., 1990). However, men depended on support at work through a supervisor, co-worker, or a subordinate (Greenglass et al., 1990). It could be argued that women should experience more burnout than men (Greenglass et al., 1990). Overall, the demands placed on women employed as administrators compared to their male counterparts

should be higher resulting in higher burnout in women (Greenglass et al., 1990). Women should experience greater burnout than their male counterparts because they assume a dual role of being spouse/partner as well as their primary responsibility for the home (Greenglass et al. 1990).

Women reported a higher quality of daily life than men and invested time in friends and cultural activities (Greenglass et al., 1990). Additionally, socializing helps women resist becoming insensitive as the result of a stressful work situation (Greenglass et al., 1990).

The relationship between age and marital status for women also determined their level of burnout (Greenglass et al., 1990). Young, single women tend to be more involved with their jobs than married women (Greenglass et al., 1990). Single or divorced women are more likely to find support at work versus married women who look to their family for support (Greenglass et al., 1990). Women who are single or divorced may be more likely to perceive their jobs as their social life leading them to be more involved with people at work, thus increasing their risk of burnout (Greenglass et al., 1990).

In comparison to women, men reported a significantly higher amount of work stress, more conflict and ambiguity, and a greater reduction in work goals (Greenglass et al., 1990). Men with high work stress and children experienced the highest level of burnout while childless men with low work stress had the lowest (Greenglass et al., 1990). The higher the rate of burnout, the greater the chances for depression and anxiety (Greenglass et al., 1990). Men, who were part of the study, reported a higher use of medication than women (Greenglass et al., 1990). Significant predictors of burnout in men are role conflict and low marital satisfaction (Greenglass et al., 1990). Due to the increase in the amount of women working, the care of children is more likely a shared responsibility which results in more pressure on the man, whereas before the man received more support from his spouse (Greenglass et al., 1990).

According to Greenglass et al. (1990), there is no significant difference in the overall burnout rate of men and women. Though, women may be better at navigating problems stemming from interpersonal work situations because of norms associated with feminine gender roles (Greenglass et al., 1990). A prescribed role for women in today's culture is for women to meaningfully relate to others in interpersonal relationships (Greenglass et al., 1990). However, this is not so for men, since they experience a higher level of depersonalization (Greenglass et al., 1990). A possible explanation for an increase in depersonalization amongst men is that they are less likely to use alternative coping techniques, like quality of daily life, investment in friends, and cultural activities (Greenglass et al., 1990). Women are expected to be more sensitive toward other people than men, and it may be more acceptable for women to confide in others, while this may be seen as a sign of weakness for men (Greenglass et al., 1990).

With similar findings as Greenglass et al. (1990), Shina Olayiwola (2008) conducted a study of 100 principals from 931 public secondary schools in Oyo State, Nigeria, Olayiwola found there was little difference of stress levels between females and males. However, Kochran, Spencer, and Mathews (1999) conducted a study of principals in Alabama, United States and did find differences in work stress between male and female principals. Kochran et al. (1999) stated that men and women differ in their view of the role of the principal. Women viewed the tasks before them in a more global manner, while men approached tasks more linear (Kochran et al., 1999). For example, women spoke about "providing leadership in the instructional area" and men spoke of "having knowledge of the curriculum" (Kochran et al., 1999). Females reported their role as someone who is responsible for leading and becoming an effective leader (Kochran et al., 1999). Conversely, men spoke more about management and control rather than leadership (Kochran et al., 1999). The need to balance home and family was only mentioned by women,

which may help to explain why workload issues are reported more often by women than men (Kochran et al., 1999).

Health and Stress

Job performance is related to positive health, effective coping, job challenges, stress, role conflict, and job satisfaction (Gmelch and Gate, 1998). Stress is the second most common cause of work related illness in the United Kingdom (Phillips et al., 2007). There are 12.8 million working days lost due to stress, anxiety, and depression (Phillips et al., 2007). According to Phillips et al. (2007), stress is the leading cause of work related illness in the education sector. In Carr's (1994) study of principals in South Australia, the study showed a high level of anxiety and or depression. The principals reported that work-related factors, not personal life issues, were a major source of stress (Carr, 1994).

Stress may cause medical issues because stress can disrupt the body's balance (Gmelch, 1991). Principals are faced with responsibilities that they never expected, which causes potential for stress (Vanderpol, 1981). Wells (2013) concurred that principals are leaving their positions because their job duties are becoming overwhelming. Feeling depressed or restless may lead to boredom or burnout (Vanderpol, 1981). Stress can also lead to doubting adequacy and ability to perform (Vanderpol, 1981). These feelings can lead to alcoholism, drug abuse, workaholism, marital discord, blaming others, hiding feelings, and the taking on of larger burdens (Vanderpol, 1981). There are studies that link stress in the workplace to increased risk of disease and ill health, which leads to decreased productivity (Phillips et al., 2007). Wells (2013) continued in saying that occupational stress may lead to headaches, high blood pressure, sleeping difficulties, heart palpitations, heart attacks, dizzy spells, breathing problems, nervous stomach, anxiety and depression.

It is important to distinguish the difference between work and life stress. Life stress refers to accumulated stress due to life changes both at home and at work (Greenglass et al., 1990). Work stress is stress created by work and work related factors (Greenglass et al., 1990). Burnout is linked to work stress, which may affect one's health and general functioning (Greenglass et al., 1990). Okoroma and Okah (2007) also state a stressful life may affect workers' performances and may lead to terminal diseases. Cushing et al. (2003) believed that job stress leads to high blood pressure and weight gain.

Coping Strategies and Factors

Environmental

It is important to recognize the demanding role of the principal (Whitaker, 1995). Principals are responsible for everything that happens in the school; they have diminishing resources to contend with increasing problems (Whitaker, 1995). During the course of a day, principals make hundreds of decisions while obtaining input from many different stakeholders (Whitaker, 1995). In order to cope with stress and the factors that lead to burnout, changing the environment is recommended (Kottkamp and Mansfield, 1985). Principals must be able to establish clear lines of authority, clear job descriptions, realistic system wide goals and objectives, have training in conflict resolution, and be able to organize personal support groups (Kottkamp and Mansfield, 1985). Extrinsic rewards such as salary, perks, and benefits could also help principals cope with burnout factors (Whitaker, 1995). Intrinsically, principals cited that greater status and verbal recognition are factors that can help avoid burnout (Whitaker, 1995). Additionally, the organization also needs to be committed to reducing burnout (Wax and Hales, 1984). There is a need for professional development to improve administrators' technical competency to face difficult issues (Wax and Hales, 1984). When working in an organization,

these technical problem-solving skills are perceived as valuable and central to a principal's life. Such skills build solidarity with colleagues as well, which may compensate for difficult and sometimes frustrating work that can lead to burnout (Kremer, Faraj, and Wubbels, 2002).

Establishing an atmosphere of mutual respect and trust among the school community is important (Ozer, 2013). When respect and trust are developed this leads to higher student performance, lower teacher burnout, increased collaboration, open professional relationships, engagement in the organization, and overall school improvement efforts (Ozer, 2013). These factors lead to a healthy school environment. When trust is missing from the school environment, principals may experience some level of stress and burnout (Ozer, 2013).

Leaders are responsible to create culture and change an unhealthy culture (Kelehear, 2004). When leaders are under a high level of stress, this creates a culture under stress (Kelehear, 2004). If stress is unmanaged it can become dysfunctional and unhealthy, which can cause a negative impact on the attitudes and morale of teachers (Kelehear, 2004). As attitudes and morale decreases, communication between administrators and teachers also decrease, creating a culture under stress (Kelehear, 2004).

For successful leadership, principals must understand the stressors of the job (Sarros, 1988). Sarros (1988) feels that principals should say "no" to some work demands and delegate responsibility to others in the school environment. Because of the heavy workload, chunking work into manageable parts is helpful (Sarros, 1988).

Personality and Perception

Depending on the principal's perspective, the principal may feel he/she has an adequate and appropriate repertoire of coping skills (Hiebert and Mendaglio, 1988). People who perceive themselves as coping effectively with the demands they face generally are not very stressed

(Hiebert and Mendaglio, 1988). There are some situations that involve heavy demands, which may overtax people's coping skills (Hiebert and Mendaglio, 1988). Those whom have limited coping repertoires perceive every demand as stressful (Hiebert and Mendaglio, 1988). Hiebert and Mendaglio (1988) also state that there is little attention given to the interplay between the intensity of the demands and the individual's response and skill to meet the demands. It may be helpful to implement wellness programs to examine one's approach to stressful events (Wax and Hales, 1984). When principals are subjected to long term, continuous moderately high to high stress with no expectation of relief, they may adjust their self-concept, redefine job roles, develop mental problems, or may develop physical problems (Wax and Hales, 1987).

Principals derive satisfaction from the amount of control they have over their positions (Phillips et al., 2007). If a principal has a Type A personality, he/she may feel chronic urgency regarding time and tend to be involved in multiple overlapping projects and tend to take on excessive job responsibilities (Kaiser and Polczynski, 1982). In contrast, Type B personalities tend to be more relaxed and more aware of their capabilities and will not become aggressive or competitive unless pushed to extremes (Kaiser and Polczynski, 1982). No matter what the principal's personality type is, increased stress levels are associated with negative consequences, which may include: alcoholism, absenteeism, drug abuse, illness, and early death—which have costs to the organization (Kaiser and Polczynski 1982).

In Hiebert and Mendaglio's (1988) study, they found most principals practice few skills that demonstrate success for controlling stress. Some principals used meditation, exercise, or chose to focus on the positive (Hiebert and Mendaglio's, 1988). Principals saw themselves as having adequate skills to handle most demands, but with two exceptions: their own high expectations and fitting their workload into a working day (Hiebert and Mendaglio's, 1988).

Self-efficacy can be defined as people's belief about their capabilities to exercise control over events that affect their lives (Friedman, 1997). There is a strong connection between self-efficacy and stress (Friedman, 1997). People with stronger perceived self-efficacy experience less stress in threatening situations and perceive situations as less stressful when they believe they can cope successfully with difficulties (Friedman, 1997).

Mental Health

Sarros (1988) stated that burnout can lead to feelings of anxiety and low self-esteem or provide an individual with the will to achieve. To understand what is the source of stress, it is important to set aside time for reflection (Vanderpol, 1981). Feelings of stress should be shared with trusted adults (Vanderpol, 1981). Principals need to be able to delegate tasks while setting realistic limits on what can be and cannot be solved (Vanderpol, 1981). Principals may have emotional reactions due to stress overload. They may become angry with colleagues, students, other administrators, which may result in decreased energy, refusal to volunteer for extra projects, or take on extra responsibilities (Kaiser and Polczynski, 1982).

Wells (2013) also explored the importance of mindfulness. She defined mindfulness as paying attention on purpose and seeing life and reality exactly as they are. As a professional, it is important to become aware of your thoughts and feelings and to encourage compassion and open mindedness (Wells, 2013). Principals must pay attention to the moment, be aware of reactive patterns, and find ways to be less reactive (Wells, 2013). Integrating mindfulness meditation includes listening and being aware of what is being heard (Wells, 2013). It may include walking, sitting, lying down, observing the mind for thoughts, being aware of breath patterns, and gentle yoga (Wells, 2013). Meditation begins with the principal's attitude and willingness to practice and pay attention to the present moment (Wells, 2013).

Existential Fulfillment

Tomic and Tomic (2008) stated that a cause of burnout could be the loss of life meaning, which transcends personal interests and well-being. It is important to seek existential fulfillment, or more simply, life fulfillment (Tomic and Tomic, 2008). Work is only one aspect of existential meaning. Someone who is incapable of making a clear distinction between self and their environment and who has lived life for others, someone who fails to connect work with self-transcendence may experience work as a burden and may also suffer from a lack of job satisfaction, exhaustion, and cynicism (Tomic and Tomic, 2008). The more a principal feels existential fulfillment, fewer burnout complaints among teachers and principals (Tomic and Tomic, 2008).

Professional Training Programs

Traditional approaches to preparing and licensing principals are ineffective and insufficient (Oplatka, 2009). Principal preparation and professional development not only should focus on knowledge and skills, but also on values and dispositions of future principals (Crow, 2006). As the role of the principal evolves, programs must adapt to meet the needs of today's principals. The University Council of Educational Administration and Division A of the American Educational Research Association developed task forces to identify the needs of school leaders (Oplatka, 2009). Based on their research, they developed a two-year principal preparation program. The research showed that: self-awareness, systemic thinking, creativity, models for solving complex problems, new techniques for coping with day to day problems, knowledge about testing and assessment of student learning, financing of public education and staff development are the most needed skills for effective leadership (Oplatka, 2009). They developed the program based on the principles of career stage theory (Oplatka, 2009). This

theory looks at one's career development as an ongoing process by which an individual progresses through a series of states, characterized by unique issues, themes, or tasks (Oplatka, 2009). Principals experience their careers differently throughout the career cycle (Oplatka, 2009).

Future or beginning principals need to gain varied tools and knowledge to face career transitions and the early years of the principalship (Oplatka, 2009). According to Oplatka (2009), principal preparation programs neglect discussions of ethics, gender, multiculturalism and race, fragmentation of knowledge base, lack of an intact reform model and program design. Principals believed that practical knowledge is taught, but principal preparation programs provide few relevant practical skills for applying theoretical knowledge to real world; this in turn limits the ability to link classroom content and real world experience (Oplatka, 2009).

According to Oplatka (2009), research suggested the most effective programs use practical teaching methods, role playing, simulation activities, internships and mentoring to encourage students to transfer theoretical knowledge to the practice of educational leadership (Oplatka, 2009). A field experience should provide students an opportunity to learn by doing. (Oplatka, 2009). A field experience must do more than provide understanding of the pace and rhythm of a principal's day (Crow, 2006). It should provide a principal candidate an opportunity to work with a variety of students, effective teachers, school and work settings (Crow, 2006).

Educational leaders should receive a general education in philosophy, sociology, and anthropology as a holistic approach of schooling and education (Oplatka, 2009). Educational leaders require reflective skills in handling innovations and change (Oplatka, 2009). The principal needs to be able to express positive and negative emotions, feel success or failures, and experience internal changes during their career (Oplatka, 2009).

Mentoring Programs

Future principals in their pre-service preparation program are provided a set of knowledge and skills that ‘experts’ in the field decided they should have to be successful (Zellner, Skrla, and Erlandson, 2001). Once their program is completed, principals must apply what they have learned in school (Zellner et al., 2001). After professional training programs, professional development becomes the responsibility of the principal (Zellner et al., 2001). Principals need a mentor network throughout their career (Zellner et al., 2001). Zellner et al. (2001) conducted a study focusing on how to improve recruitment and mentoring of school leaders and how to support principals throughout their career. They found that mentoring was of significant importance (Zellner et al., 2001). They also concluded that future leaders need opportunities to participate in leadership activities including planning, developing, directing, and implementing school programs and educational change (Zellner et al., 2001). Zellner et al. (2001) believed that principal preparation programs should provide opportunities for students to work collaboratively with practicing principals on real school issues. Preparation programs need to instruct future leaders on how to do the following:

- Design a school vision
- Design benchmarks for targeted goals
- Design evaluation plans for tracking progress toward targeted goals
- Design a framework for developing a learning school
- Develop a plan for mentoring and supporting of shared leadership throughout the school (Zellner et al., 2001).

Additionally, principal preparation programs need to stress the importance of the following:

- Reflecting on one’s leadership practice

- Building a mentor network
- Linking theory to practice
- Developing leadership skills prior to accepting an administrative position (Zellner et al., 2001).

Often times, principals participate in staff development with teachers who have different professional development needs (Whitaker, 1995). When principals meet, there should be time for discussion, reflection, problem solving, and a focus on personal and professional growth (Whitaker, 1995). When staff development is being planned, staff developers need to create a formal/informal network of teams of principals working together so that collaboration and collegiality may be achieved (Whitaker, 1995). Whitaker concurred that principals need a greater support system and enhanced professional development and growth opportunities to renew their energy (Whitaker, 1995). Whitaker also suggested the need for establishing training for new principals to be equipped to face the realities of the position (Whitaker, 1995). The role of the principal must be rewarding, fulfilling, and challenging and provide growth opportunities (Whitaker, 1995). Whitaker (1995) agreed that mentoring and networking systems are needed. Even experienced principals can benefit from mentoring programs (Whitaker, 1995). The best mentoring includes a high degree of trust for individual styles (Zellner et al., 2001). Mentoring programs may involve more than one-on-one mentoring (Lashway, 2003). They may include a portfolio, professional development plans, study groups, leadership academies, focus groups, peer coaching, workshops, or retreats (Lashway, 2003).

New principals are faced with many demands at once, such as: having to master technical skills, learn to work with a variety of constituents, feelings of inadequacy, and a fast-paced environment with little time to reflect (Lashway, 2003). Principal mentoring programs help by

offering instructional support: they focus the new principal on learning issues as well as presenting models of successful practice (Lashway, 2003). Mentors can provide managerial support and help new principals set priorities. Mentors also provide new principals with emotional support by listening and being present at stressful moments. Mentoring programs can help principals stay focused on the big picture, while respecting the immediate needs for discussion (Lashway, 2003).

Conversely, mentoring programs may also surface concerns (Lashway, 2003). A mentor may be too controlling or overprotective. They may try to shape a new principal into a clone of themselves (Lashway, 2003). They may also present a narrow point of view on the new principal's situation (Lashway, 2003).

Besides mentoring, the use of coaching may be used as a coping factor. Programs that use coaching methods help an individual gain the skills he or she needs to be productive (Stephenson and Bauer, 2010). However, coaching can be used to reduce negative factors such as burnout to improve employee retention (Stephenson and Bauer, 2010). Coaching interventions need to be designed to improve the performance of new principals and enhance the participants' skills in building a networks of peers from whom they can learn (Stephenson and Bauer, 2010).

Socialization

A large majority of principals have been teachers (Crow, 2006). As teachers move into the role of principal, they rely upon their prior observations of principal/s (Crow, 2006). They also rely upon their own expertise as teachers and their non-educational work experience (Crow, 2006). These components help them understand how they develop instructional orientation, a nature of knowledge, cultural sensitivity to students, and conceptions of instructional leadership (Crow, 2006). It is vital to understand the importance of the socialization—how principals learn

their job—that occurs during the new principal’s induction period (Crow, 2006). Beginning principals experience socialization personally, professionally and organizationally (Crow, 2006).

Professional socialization includes university preparation programs where future principals learn the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to understand the role of principal (Crow, 2006). This includes classes on finance, law, leadership, and organizational theory (Crow, 2006). Through coursework and internships, future principals develop increased role clarity, technical expertise, role conceptions, and develop skills and professional behaviors.

Organizational socialization occurs when beginning principals make sense of their roles by themselves or by using informal feedback from teachers, students, parents, and other administrators (Crow, 2006). The principal learns how particular things are accomplished in an organization (Crow, 2006). As principals are flooded with information regarding organizational practices, this leaves little or no time for reflective practices (Crow, 2006). With little time for reflective practices, this may lead to additional stress and ineffective performance (Crow, 2006). For this reason, a principal’s transition through socialization should include being open to change (Crow, 2006). Open to change in personal identity, the priorities of the tasks they face, and what constitutes an effective organization (Crow, 2006).

Summary

In summary, a substantial amount of research indicates that principals experience a high level of stress due to the variety of tasks performed in their diverse roles (Whitaker, 1996). High levels of stress can lead to burnout. Feelings of burnout can lead to emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced feelings of personal accomplishment (Maslach and Jackson, 1986). Also, the research indicates that women tended to present a higher mean of burnout levels than men (Oplatka, 2002). According to the research, principals must be able to establish clear

lines of authority, clear job descriptions, realistic system wide goals and objectives, have training in conflict resolution, and be able to organize personal support groups (Kottkamp and Mansfield, 1985). Understanding the role of the principal and the stress that they face diminishes the likelihood of principal burnout.

CHAPTER III: Methodology

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine stress and coping strategies of select Minnesota secondary school principals. The study also examined differences in job stresses experienced by male and female secondary school principals, strategies employed by select Minnesota secondary school principals to cope with job stresses, varied strategies used to cope with job stresses employed by male and female secondary school principals in Minnesota, and the manner in which job stresses of select Minnesota secondary school principals change as a function of position longevity.

Chapters 1 and 2, respectively, provided an overview of the proposed study and a review of current research related to the topic of stress factors and coping strategies. Chapter 3 describes the research method, sample, instrumentation, data collection, and method of analysis.

Research Questions

In order to address the research problem, the following study questions have been developed:

1. What are the major sources of job stress reported by select Minnesota secondary school principals?
2. What are the differences in job stresses experienced by male and female secondary school principals in Minnesota?
3. What are the strategies employed by select Minnesota secondary school principals to cope with job stresses?
4. What are the differences in strategies employed by male and female secondary school principals in Minnesota to cope with job stresses?

5. How do job stresses of select Minnesota secondary school principals change as a function of position longevity?

Research Methodology

The research design was conducted employing quantitative methods. “In quantitative research, researchers collect numerical data from individuals or groups and usually subject these data to statistical analyses to determine whether there are relationships among them” (Slavin, 2007 p.7). Study data were gathered through the use of the Administrative Stress Index (ASI) survey developed by Walter Gmelch and Boyd Swent. The Administrative Stress Index was chosen for the study due to the reliability and the validity of the instrument. The original instrument was administered to 1,855 members of the Confederation of Oregon School Administrators which included vice-principals, principals, superintendents, and central office administrators as respondents (Gmelch, 1982). Of the 1,855 Confederation of Oregon School Administrator members who were sent the Administrative Stress Index, 1,207 (62.3%) were returned. The average age of respondents in the sample was 42 years old, ninety-one percent of respondents were males; and members of the sample group averaged nine years of administrative experience. The median hours of work reported by respondents were 55 while the median amount of total stress reported due to his/her administrative position was 75% (Gmelch, 1982).

The ASI was developed by Swent and Gmelch in 1977. The ASI instrument was first developed using the index of Job-Related Strain, designed by Indik, Seashore, and Slesinger in 1964. It was administered to a sample of 8,234 industrial employees with diverse ages, educational and occupational backgrounds. The index of Job-Related Strain included fifteen questions and only identified the source of occupational stress. Gmelch and Swent expanded the instrument by adding additional items as suggested by a review of current publications for public

school administrators as well as from data gathered from a log of stressful events that 40 administrators recorded for a one week period of time (Gmelch, 1982). Public school administrators were asked to keep a record of the most stressful event which occurred during the day as well as the most stressful series of related events (recurring telephone interruptions, pending grievances, parent-teacher conflicts) (Gmelch, 1982). Public school administrators were also asked to identify potential stressors that may not have been identified in their logs. The pilot instrument was subsequently field tested for content validity and clarity by 25 practicing administrators. The instrument was revised and a second pilot testing was undertaken by 20 practicing administrators.

The final version of the Administrative Stress Index (ASI) included 35 questions of which 23 were derived from the logs of the public school administrators. Demographic questions followed the 35 stress items. In addition, an open-ended question was provided to permit administrators to list techniques they found useful in addressing job pressures (Gmelch, 1982). The Administrative Stress Index (ASI) uses a five point Likert scale with a continuum from 1 (rarely or never bothers me) to 5 (frequently bothers me).

The Administrative Stress Index is unique in that it was developed specifically for use with public school administrators.

Pilot Testing

The Administrative Stress Index was validated by the Gmelch and Swent, authors of the instrument. To maximize the validity of the instrument, the questionnaire was developed specifically for use with a homogeneous population of administrators of education institutions (Gmelch, 1982). Due to the reliability and validity of the instrument having been previously established, there was no need for pilot testing of the instrument prior to its administration.

Population

The Administrative Stress Index was emailed to select Minnesota secondary school principals using the member database of Minnesota Association of Secondary School Principals (MASSP) organization. The participants in the study remained anonymous. Permission to conduct the study and administer the ASI to study participants was sought from the Institutional Review Board (IRB), (Appendix C).

Data Collection

Study data were collected using SurveyMonkey. All participants received an email that explained the purpose of the study, insured respondent confidentiality, and provided a link to the ASI survey questions. The study was emailed to participants in June of 2015. A follow-up email was sent to participants to secure timely and numerically adequate responses to the ASI survey.

Data Analysis

The study's sample group was identified from among members contained on the membership database of the Minnesota Association of Secondary School Principals (MASSP). Permission was secured from the Executive Director of MASSP to access the organization's data base as well as to use MASSP staff members to distribute emails to the membership (Appendix D). Findings of the study received will be shared with MASSP membership at their annual summer conference in 2016.

Secondary school principals holding membership in MASSP may include leaders in buildings with 5-8, 9-12, or 7-12 grade level configurations. For the purpose of this study only secondary school principals received an email from the researcher detailing the purpose of the study and a link to the study instrument. Assistant principals or Deans of Students were not included in the study.

Secondary school principals received an email from the researcher explaining the purpose of the study as well as a link to complete the survey instrument (Appendix B). All professional methods and research standards were followed. One follow-up email was sent approximately three weeks after the initial email to encourage MASSP members to complete the survey if they had not already done so.

According to Slavin (2007), descriptive statistics are “simply convenient ways of summarizing characteristics of data in a form everyone can understand and use” (p.21). The data were analyzed to respond to each of the research questions. Analysis of data was conducted at the St. Cloud State Office of Statistical Analysis using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). An internal reliability coefficient was calculated. Using SPSS, Chronbach’s Alpha was computed to be .917 for the total scale. The alpha is above .9 indicating the sample has high internal consistency and reliability.

By using SurveyMonkey (Appendix A), descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data and report major stresses reported by select Minnesota secondary school principals, the differences in job stresses experienced by male and female secondary school principals, strategies employed by select Minnesota secondary school principals to cope with job stresses, the differences in strategies employed by male and female secondary school principals in Minnesota used to cope with job stresses, and how job stresses of select Minnesota secondary school principals change as a function of position longevity. Descriptive analysis of each variable was determined by calculating means and standard deviations as well as the range of responses and frequency distribution. Also, the analysis looked for all possible correlations between research factors including gender and longevity.

The two open-ended response questions were analyzed by coding the data into categories. The categories of the responses were examined for major sources of stress reported by select Minnesota secondary school principals and strategies employed to cope with job stresses.

Summary

The purpose of this study is to examine job stresses and coping strategies of select Minnesota secondary school principals. Chapter three included the purpose for the study, research questions, research methodology, pilot testing, population, data collection, and data analysis. Chapter four presents study results.

CHAPTER IV: RESULTS

Introduction

According to Sogunro (2012), principals encounter more stress in today's schools than they have in the past. This stress occurs daily and builds and impacts both principals' jobs and personal lives (Sogunro, 2012). The purpose of the study was to examine stresses and coping strategies reported by select Minnesota secondary school principals. Effective principals lead effective schools, yet stress induced burnout can impact the organization and an administrator's leadership abilities. It was believed valuable to identify the sources of stress for school principals, coping strategies they need to combat stress, in part, because of the changing role of principals. This study also examined the differences of job stresses experienced by male and female secondary school principals as well as the strategies they used to cope with those job stresses. This study also examined whether or not job stresses of school principals changed as a function of position longevity.

In this chapter, a summary of descriptive data is presented followed by the findings for each research question. Analysis of data was conducted at the St. Cloud State Office of Statistical Analysis using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Using SPSS, Chronbach's Alpha was computed to .917 for the total scale. An alpha value that is higher than .9 indicates that the sample has high internal consistency and reliability.

Research Methods

This research design employed a quantitative methodology. "In quantitative research, researchers collect numerical data from individuals or groups and usually subject these to data to statistical analyses to determine whether there are relationships among them" (Slavin, 2007 p.7). Also, in quantitative research, "researchers seek facts and causes of human behavior and want to

know a lot about a few variables so differences can be identified” (Roberts, 2010, p. 142). Study data were gathered through the use of the Administrative Stress Index (ASI) survey developed by Walter Gmelch and Boyd Swent.

The data were analyzed and findings were organized according to each research question. The study was directed by the following questions.

1. What are the major sources of job stress reported by select Minnesota secondary school principals?
2. What are differences in the job stresses experienced by male and female secondary school principals in Minnesota?
3. What are the strategies employed by select Minnesota secondary school principal to cope with job stresses?
4. What are the differences in strategies employed by male and female secondary school principals in Minnesota to cope with job stresses?
5. How do job stresses of select Minnesota secondary school principals change as a function of position longevity?

Description of the Sample

For this study, 581 Minnesota secondary school principals were identified as potential study participants from among the membership database of the Minnesota Secondary School Principals (MASSP). An email was distributed to potential participants that explained the purpose of the study and provided a link to the Administrative Stress Index (ASI) survey questions (Appendix B). The Administrative Stress Index (ASI) consists of 35 work-related situations as sources of concern followed by demographic questions. In addition, an open-ended question was posed so administrators could list techniques or strategies they found useful in

handling job pressures (Gmelch, 1982). Of the possible participants, 223 principals, or 38%, responded to the survey. However, 200 responses were determined to be valid responses.

Demographic information including age, years in present position, years in administration, hours worked per week, hours of physical exercise per week, and percentage of job stress resulting from their position as principal are all represented in Tables 1-5.

Table 1
Frequency Distribution by Age (N=200)

Age	N	Percentage
45 or less	71	36.8
46-50	55	28.5
Over 51	67	34.7
Did not answer	7	

The age group most frequently reported by respondents (N=71, 36.8%) was in the 45 or less age category. The majority of all respondents (63.2%, N=122) reported their ages between 46-67 years.

Respondents were asked to report the number of years they have served in their present position. Table 2 reports the years the responses.

Table 2

Frequency Distribution for Years in Present Position (N=200)

Range of Years	N	Percentage
1-3	74	37.0
4-8	64	32.0
9-38	62	31.0

The most common range of years in the present position reported by respondents was 1-3 (N=74, 37%). The next survey question asked respondents to report the number of years served in school administration.

Table 3 describes the number of years respondents reported that they had served in school administration.

Table 3

Frequency Distribution for Years in Administration (N=200)

Range of Years	N	Percentage
1-9	68	34.3
10-15	67	33.8
16-38	63	31.8
Did not answer	2	

The most frequently reported range of years respondents served as a school administrator was 1-9 (N=68, 34.3%), while 33.8% (N=67) of respondents reported having served 10-15 years in administration.

Table 4 describes the number of respondents who engaged in physical exercise each week.

Table 4
Frequency Distribution of Physical Exercise Per Week (N=200)

Range of Hours	N	Percentage
No exercise	18	9.3
1-3	69	35.6
4-10	103	53.1
11-15	4	2.1
Did not answer	9	

The range of hours of physical exercise per week most reported by respondents was between 4-10 hours (N=103, 53.1%).

Table 5 reports the percentage of total stress respondents' experienced in their lives as a result of their positions.

Table 5

Frequency of Percentage of Total Stress in Your Life as a Result of Position (N=200)

Range of Total Stress Level Percent	N	Percentage
5-50	46	23.4
55-85	105	53.2
90-100	46	23.4
Did not answer	3	

The range of total stress level in the respondents' lives expressed most frequently was between 55-85 percent (N=105, 53.2%). Two stress level ranges, 5-50 percent and 90-100 percent, were reported by 23.4% (N=46) of respondents.

Research Question 1

What are the major sources of job stress reported by select Minnesota secondary school principals?

Quantitative data were collected from the Administrative Stress Index (ASI) survey. Data were analyzed to determine the mean value of the respondents' answers to the 35 work-related situations that were sources of concern. The researcher used the framework of Gmelch and Gate (1998), which identified four causes of stress: role-based, task-based, boundary spanning, and conflict mediating stress. The researcher categorized the 35 ASI work-related situations into one of Gmelch and Gate's categories. In addition, information was gathered from an open-ended question about sources of concern of job stresses experienced by respondent principals.

Table 6 ranks, by mean scores, task-based work-related situations that were sources of concern by respondents.

Table 6

Mean Scores of Task-Based Work-Related Situations as Sources of Concern (N=200)

Statement	M(N=200)	SD
Feeling that I have too heavy of a work load, one that I cannot possibly finish during the day	3.4286	1.11185
Feeling that meetings take up too much of my time	3.3596	.96151
Trying to complete reports and other paper work on time	3.0246	.88686
Having my work frequently interrupted by staff members who want to talk	2.6946	.92025
Being interrupted frequently by telephone calls	2.6404	.73373
Evaluating staff members' performance	2.4877	.88082
Trying to influence my immediate supervisor's actions and decisions that affect me	2.4236	.90534
Supervising and coordinating the tasks of many people	2.4236	.86048
Writing memos, letters, and other communications	2.3498	.85645
Handling student discipline problems	2.2266	.84893
Speaking in front of groups	1.8227	.89999

Note. 1=never bothers me; 2=rarely bothers me; 3=occasionally bothers me; 4=frequently bothers me; 5=always bothers me

The mean scores for task-based work-related situations as sources of concern ranged from a high of 3.4286—feeling of having too heavy of a work load, one that cannot possibly be finished during the day—to a low of 1.8227, speaking in front of groups. The mean for all task-based work-related situations as sources of concern was 2.63— indicating that respondents were rarely bothered by these situations. The overall mean was calculated by using the mean of all 11 ASI survey instrument sources of task-based work-related concerns. Standard deviations of the items ranged from .73373 to 1.11185 with only one of the sources of concern having a standard deviation larger than one. This reflected that there was less agreement by the respondents about the level of concern of the items.

Table 7 ranks by mean score of work-related sources of concern according to role-based work-related situations.

Table 7

Mean Scores of Role-Based Work-Related Situations as Sources of Concern (N=200)

Statement	M(N=200)	SD
Imposing excessively high expectations on myself	3.2906	1.00949
Feeling I have to participate in school activities outside of the normal working hours at the expense of my personal time	3.0394	1.09834
Feeling that the progress on my job is not what it should or could be	2.8424	.95688
Feeling staff members don't understand my goals and expectations	2.8227	.81937
Thinking that I will not be able to satisfy the conflicting demands of those who have authority over me	2.8227	1.03315
Feeling pressure for a better job performance over and above what I think is reasonable	2.8177	1.11306
Feeling that I have too much responsibility delegated to me by my supervisor	2.6502	1.02486
Knowing I can't get information needed to carry out my job properly	2.6256	.94802
Feeling that I have too little authority to carry out responsibilities assigned to me	2.4778	1.01633
Not knowing what my supervisor thinks of me, or how he/she evaluates my performance	2.4532	1.03480
Being unclear on just what the scope and responsibilities of my job are	2.2906	.94882
Feeling that I am not fully qualified to handle my job	2.0443	.93502
Feeling not enough is expected of me by my superiors	1.5074	.74707

Note. 1=never bothers me; 2=rarely bothers me; 3=occasionally bothers me; 4=frequently bothers me; 5=always bothers me

The mean scores for role-based work-related situations as sources of concern ranged from a high of 3.2906—imposing excessively high expectations on myself—to a low of 1.5074, feeling not enough is expected of me by my superiors. The mean for all role-based work-related situations as sources of concern was 2.59. This indicated that respondents were rarely bothered by these situations. The overall mean was calculated by using the mean of all 13 ASI survey instrument sources of role-based work-related concerns. Standard deviations of the items ranged from .74707 to 1.11306 with seven of the sources of concern having a standard deviation larger than one. This reflected that there was less agreement by the respondents about the level of concern of the items.

Table 8 ranks by mean score of work-related sources of concern according to conflict mediating situations.

Table 8

Mean Scores of Conflict Mediating Work-Related Situations as Sources of Concern (N=200)

Statement	M(N=200)	SD
Trying to resolve parent/school conflict	2.8473	.82133
Trying to resolve differences between/among staff members	2.8325	.85105
Trying to resolve differences between/among students	2.3596	.86959
Trying to resolve differences with my superiors	2.1970	1.01014

Note. 1=never bothers me; 2=rarely bothers me; 3=occasionally bothers me; 4=frequently bothers me; 5=always bothers me

The mean scores for conflict mediating work-related situations as sources of concern ranged from a high of 2.8473—trying to resolve parent/school conflict—to a low of 2.1970, trying to resolve differences with my superiors. The mean for all conflict mediating work-related situations as sources of concern was 2.56. This indicated that respondents were rarely bothered by these situations. The overall mean was calculated by using the mean of all four ASI survey instrument sources of conflict mediating work-related concerns. Standard deviations of the items ranged from .82133 to 1.01014 with only one of the sources of concern having a standard deviation larger than one. This reflected that there was less agreement by the respondents about the level of concern of the items.

Table 9 ranks by mean score of work-related sources of concern according to boundary spanning situations.

Table 9

Mean Scores of Boundary Spanning Work-Related Situations as Sources of Concern (N=200)

Statement	M(N=200)	SD
Having to make decisions that affect the lives of individual people that I know (colleagues, staff members, students, etc.)	3.0887	.96062
Complying with state, federal, and organizational rules and policies	3.0394	1.01884
Trying to gain public approval and/or financial support for school programs	2.6502	.98042
Attempting to meet social expectations (housing, clubs, friends, etc.)	2.6207	.96931
Preparing and allocating budget resources	2.3596	.88090
Administering the negotiated contract (grievances, interpretations, etc.)	2.2611	.87076
Being involved in the collective bargaining process	1.8818	.89322

Note. 1=never bothers me; 2=rarely bothers me; 3=occasionally bothers me; 4=frequently bothers me; 5=always bothers me

The mean scores for boundary spanning work-related situations as sources of concern ranged from a high of 3.0887- having to make decisions that affect the lives of individual people that I know (colleagues, staff members, students, etc.)- to a low of 1.8818, being involved in the collective bargaining process. The mean for all boundary spanning work-related situations as sources of concern was 2.56. This indicated that respondents were rarely bothered by these

situations. The overall mean was calculated by using the mean of all seven ASI survey instrument sources of boundary spanning work-related concerns. Standard deviations of the items ranged from .87076 to 1.01884 with only one of the sources of concern having a standard deviation larger than one. This reflected that there was less agreement by the respondents about the level of concern of the items.

Table 10 ranks by mean score of work-related sources of concern according to role-based, task-based, boundary spanning, and conflict mediating.

Table 10

Mean Scores of 35 Work-Related Situations Categorized by Role-Based, Task-Based, Boundary Spanning, and Conflict Mediating (N=200)

Category	M (N=200)	SD
Task-Based	2.6256	.49136
Role-Based	2.5911	.60307
Conflict Mediating	2.5591	.61001
Boundary Spanning	2.5574	.54667

The mean scores for work-related situations categorized by role-based, task-based, boundary spanning, and conflict mediating ranged from 2.6256 to 2.5574. The mean of all the categories was 2.58 and revealed that respondents were rarely concerned by these situations. Overall, the mean of 2.6256 for task-based situations caused the highest source of concern.

Table 11 reports the correlations of the work-related situations as categorized by role-based, task-based, boundary spanning, and conflict mediating.

Table 11

Correlations among Work-Related Situations Categorized by Role-Based, Task-Based, Boundary Spanning, and Conflict Mediating

	Task-Based	Role-Based	Conflict Mediating	Boundary Spanning
Task-Based	1	** .703	** .622	** .627
Role-Based	** .703	1	** .532	** .589
Conflict Mediating	** .622	** .532	1	** .613
Boundary Spanning	** .627	** .589	** .613	1

Note. ** Correlation is significant at the .01 level

Statistical analysis showed that there was a strong relationship between task-based and role-based work-related situations ($r=.703$). Statistical analysis also showed a moderately strong relationship between role based and conflict mediating ($r=.532$), role-based and boundary spanning ($r=.589$), task-based and conflict mediating ($r=.622$), task-based and boundary spanning ($r=.627$), and boundary spanning to conflict mediating ($r=.613$).

The next survey question was open-ended and asked respondents to list other work-related sources of concerns. Table 12 reports the frequency of other work-related sources of concern reported by respondents.

Table 12

Other Sources of Concern as Reported by Principals (N=42)

Category	Frequency	Valid Percent
Legal	3	7.1
Federal, state, and local mandates	9	21.4
Lack of communication from central office, superintendent, or Board of Education	6	14.2
Lack of Time	11	26.2
Staff Issues	2	4.8
Additional meetings/trainings	3	7.1
Outside pressures (media, parents, community expectations)	8	19

Information was gathered from an open-ended question about sources of work-related situations as sources of concern of job stresses experienced by the respondent principals. Based on the responses from 42 of the 200 participants, themes were developed to best fit the respondents' responses. Respondents most frequently reported source of concern was time (26.2%). Select respondents stated concerns about: "having not enough time to observe the good things that are happening at my school and talking with kids," "having no one to delegate any of my responsibilities to." The second most reported source of concern by respondents was federal, state, and local mandates (21.4%). Respondents cited such issues as compliance with special education, mandates dealing with healthy eating, and bullying legislation.

Summary of Significant Findings: Research Question 1

Research question one explored the major sources of job stress reported by select Minnesota secondary school principals. The researcher used the framework of Gmelch and Gate (1988), which identified four causes of stress: role-based, task-based, boundary spanning, and conflict mediating. The researcher categorized the 35 work-related situations in the ASI into one of Gmelch's and Gate's categories and found task-based work-related situations caused the highest level of stress. Specifically, "feeling that I have too heavy of a workload, one that I cannot possibly finish during the day," yielded the highest mean score, 3.4286, and indicated that respondents were occasionally bothered by these situations.

However, the initial analysis of data showed that respondents were rarely bothered by the work-related sources of concern as identified in Gmelch's and Gate's framework. In addition, information from an open-ended question about additional sources of concern of job stresses experienced by respondent principals was gathered. This indicated that lack of time was the most frequently reported concern.

Research Question 2

What are differences in the job stresses experienced by male and female secondary school principals in Minnesota?

Quantitative data were collected from the Administrative Stress Index (ASI) survey to analyze and examine research question two. Statistics were calculated by gender to identify the mean of the respondents' answers to the 35 work-related situations as sources of concern. In addition, the researcher used the framework of Gmelch and Gate (1998) which identified four causes of stress: role-based, task-based, boundary spanning, and conflict mediating stress. The researcher categorized the 35 work-related situations in the ASI into one of Gmelch and Gate's

four categories and compared responses by gender. Also, information was gathered from an open-ended question about sources of concern of job stresses experienced by respondents.

Table 13 provides mean ranks of the 35 work-related situations as sources of concern reported by males.

Table 13

Mean Scores of 35 Task-Based Work-Related Situations as Sources of Concern Reported by

Males Respondents (N=141)

Statement	M(N=141)	SD
Feeling that meetings take up too much of my time	3.3404	.99878
Feeling that I have too heavy of a work load, one that I cannot possibly finish during the day	3.3262	1.2438
Trying to complete reports and other paper work on time	2.9362	.85534
Having my work frequently interrupted by staff members who want to talk	2.7447	.88966
Being interrupted frequently by telephone calls	2.6738	.68135
Evaluating staff members' performance	2.4894	.89934
Supervising and coordinating the tasks of many people	2.4184	.85487
Writing memos, letters, and other communications	2.3688	.86529
Trying to influence my immediate supervisor's actions and decisions that affect me	2.3475	.87002
Handling student discipline problems	2.1773	.84755
Speaking in front of groups	1.7376	.90747
Note. 1=never bothers me; 2=rarely bothers me; 3=occasionally bothers me; 4=frequently bothers me; 5=always bothers me		

The mean scores for task-based work-related situations as sources of concern for males ranged from a high of 3.3404—feeling that meetings take up too much of my time—to a low of 1.7376, speaking in front of groups. The average mean of 2.60 for all task-based work-related situations as sources of concern revealed that male respondents were rarely bothered by these

situations. The overall mean was calculated using the mean of all 11 ASI survey instrument sources of task-based work-related concerns. Standard deviations of the items ranged from .68135 to 1.12438 with one of the sources of concern having a standard deviation larger than one. This established that there was less agreement by the male respondents to the level of concern of the item.

Table 14 provides a ranking of the mean scores of the role-based work-related situations that are sources of concern to male respondents.

Table 14

Mean Scores of Role-Based Work-Related Situations as Sources of Concern Reported by Male

Respondents (N=141)

Statement	M(N=141)	SD
Imposing excessively high expectations on myself	3.1773	1.00913
Feeling I have to participate in school activities outside of the normal working hours at the expense of my personal time	2.9362	1.09030
Feeling staff members don't understand my goals and expectations	2.8440	.78634
Feeling that the progress on my job is not what it should or could be	2.7943	.92209
Thinking that I will not be able to satisfy the conflicting demands of those who have authority over me	2.7730	1.02378
Feeling pressure for a better job performance over and above what I think is reasonable	2.7589	1.08167
Feeling that I have too much responsibility delegated to me by my supervisor	2.5674	1.03029
Knowing I can't get information needed to carry out my job properly	2.5674	.85611
Not knowing what my supervisor thinks of me, or how he/she evaluates my performance	2.3901	.97668
Feeling that I have too little authority to carry out responsibilities assigned to me	2.3404	.96236
Being unclear on just what the scope and responsibilities of my job are	2.2624	.92308
Feeling that I am not fully qualified to handle my job	2.0426	.93253
Feeling not enough is expected of me by my superiors	1.5674	.79557

Note. 1=never bothers me; 2=rarely bothers me; 3=occasionally bothers me; 4=frequently bothers me; 5=always bothers me

The mean scores for role-based work-related situations as sources of concern for males ranged from a high of 3.1773—imposing excessively high expectations on myself—to a low of 1.5674, feeling not enough is expected of me by my superiors. The average mean of 2.54 for all role-based work-related situations as sources of concern revealed that male respondents were rarely bothered by these situations. The overall mean was calculated using the mean of all 13 ASI survey instrument sources of role-based work-related concerns. Standard deviations of the items ranged from .78634 to 1.09030 with five of the sources of concern having standard deviations larger than one. This established that there was less agreement by the male respondents to the level of concern of the item.

Table 15 provides a ranking of the mean scores of the conflict mediating work-related situations that are sources of concern to male respondents.

Table 15

Mean Scores of Conflict Mediating Work-Related Situations as Sources of Concern Reported by
Male Respondents (N=141)

Statement	M(N=141)	SD
Trying to resolve parent/school conflicts	2.8511	.82753
Trying to resolve differences between/among staff members	2.8298	.86154
Trying to resolve differences between/among students	2.3617	.85588
Trying to resolve differences with my superiors	2.1915	1.00651

Note. 1=never bothers me; 2=rarely bothers me; 3=occasionally bothers me; 4=frequently bothers me; 5=always bothers me

The mean scores for conflict mediating work-related situations as sources of concern for males ranged from a high of 2.8511—trying to resolve parent/school conflicts—to a low of 2.1915, trying to resolve differences with my superiors. The average mean of 2.56 for all the conflict mediating work-related situations as sources of concern revealed that male respondents were rarely bothered by these situations. The overall mean was calculated using the mean of all four ASI survey instrument sources of conflict mediating work-related concerns. Standard deviations of the items ranged from .85534 to 1.00651 with one of the sources of concern having a standard deviation larger than one. This established that there was less agreement by the male respondents to the level of concern of the item.

Table 16 provides a ranking of the mean scores of the boundary spanning work-related situations that are sources of concern to male respondents.

Table 16

Mean Scores of Boundary Spanning Work-Related Situations as Sources of Concern by Male

Respondents (N=141)

Statement	M(N=141)	SD
Complying with state, federal, and organizational rules and policies	3.0567	1.01962
Having to make decisions that affect the lives of individual people that I know (colleagues, staff members, students, etc.)	3.0567	.99120
Trying to gain public approval and/or financial support for school programs	2.6502	.98042
Attempting to meet social expectations (housing, clubs, friends, etc.)	2.4897	.93821
Preparing and allocating budget resources	2.3333	.84233
Administering the negotiated contract (grievances, interpretations, etc.)	2.2199	.77545
Being involved in the collective bargaining process	1.7801	.84593

Note. 1=never bothers me; 2=rarely bothers me; 3=occasionally bothers me; 4=frequently bothers me; 5=always bothers me

The mean scores for boundary spanning work-related situations as sources of concern for males ranged from a high of 3.0567—complying with state, federal, and organizational rules and policies and to having to make decisions that affect the lives of individual people that I know (colleagues, staff members, students, etc.)—to a low of 1.7801, being involved in the collective

bargaining process. The average mean of 2.51 for all boundary spanning work-related situations as sources of concern revealed that male respondents were rarely bothered by these situations. The overall mean was calculated using the mean of all seven ASI survey instrument sources of boundary spanning work-related concerns. Standard deviations of the items ranged from .77545 to 1.01962 with only one of the sources of concern having standard deviation larger than one. This established that there was less agreement by the male respondents to the level of concern of the item.

Table 17 ranks by mean score the 35 work-related situations according to role-based, task-based, boundary spanning, and conflict mediating of male respondents.

Table 17 (N=141)

Mean Scores of 35 Work-Related Situations Categorized by Role-Based, Task-Based, Boundary Spanning, and Conflict Mediating of Male Respondents

Category	Mean (N=141)	SD
Task-Based	2.5964	.49488
Role-Based	2.5401	.57007
Conflict Mediating	2.5585	.61647
Boundary Spanning	2.4965	.54011

Note. 1=never bothers me; 2=rarely bothers me; 3=occasionally bothers me; 4=frequently bothers me; 5=always bothers me

The mean scores for work-related situations reported by male respondents categorized by role-based, task-based, boundary spanning, and conflict mediating ranged from 2.5964 to 2.4965. The average mean of 2.55 of all the categories indicates that respondents were rarely bothered by

these situations. Overall, the mean of 2.5964 indicated the highest source of concern for male respondents was with task-based situations.

The next survey question was open-ended and asked participants to list additional sources of work-related sources of concern. Table 18 reports the frequency of other work-related sources of concern of male participants.

Table 18

Other Sources of Concern as Reported by Male Principals (N=28)

Category	Frequency	Valid Percent
Legal	1	3.6
Federal, state, and local mandates	5	21.4
Lack of communication from central office, superintendent, or board of education	3	10.7
Lack of Time	10	35.7
Staff Issues	2	7.1
Additional meetings/trainings	2	7.1
Outside pressures (media, parents, community expectations)	5	17.9

Information was gathered from an open-ended question about sources of work-related situations as sources of concern of job stresses experienced by male respondent principals. Based on the responses from the male respondents, themes were created to best fit the respondents' responses. Male respondents most frequently reported source of concern was time (26.2%). Select male respondents stated concerns about: "an overall lack of time to get the work done in

the time allotted to the best of my ability,” “too much responsibility jammed into the time available (tired of working Sundays just to keep up).” The second most reported source of concern by male respondents was federal, state, and local mandates (17.9%) and outside pressures: media, parents, community expectations (17.9%). Respondents cited such issues as dealing with more families, staff disagreeing with rules and regulations and outside pressures such as parents and “the challenges with helping people outside of school recognize and respect the scope of the principalship and the time demands.”

The next survey question asked female respondents to respond to the following task-based work-related situations that are sources of concern. Table 19 provides a ranking of the mean scores of the task-based work-related situations that are sources of concern to female respondents.

Table 19

Mean Scores of 35 Task-Based Work-Related Situations as Sources of Concern Reported by

Female Respondents (N=57)

Statement	M(N=57)	SD
Feeling that I have too heavy of a work load, one that I cannot possibly finish during the day	3.7368	1.02689
Feeling that meetings take up too much of my time	3.4035	.90356
Trying to complete reports and other paper work on time	3.2456	.95020
Having my work frequently interrupted by staff members who want to talk	2.6491	.97268
Trying to influence my immediate supervisor's actions and decisions that affect me	2.6491	.93525
Being interrupted frequently by telephone calls	2.6140	.83995
Evaluating staff members' performance	2.4912	.86855
Supervising and coordinating the tasks of many people	2.4561	.88782
Handling student discipline problems	2.3509	.85547
Writing memos, letters, and other communications	2.2807	.83995
Speaking in front of groups	2.0175	.87610

Note. 1=never bothers me; 2=rarely bothers me; 3=occasionally bothers me; 4=frequently bothers me; 5=always bothers me

The mean scores for task-based work-related situations as sources of concern for females ranged from a high of 3.3404—feelings that I have too heavy of a workload, one that I cannot possibly finish during the day—to a low of 2.0175, speaking in front of groups. The average mean of 2.72 for all task-based work-related situations as sources of concern revealed that female respondents were rarely bothered by these situations. The overall mean was calculated using the mean of all 11 ASI survey instrument sources of task-based work-related concerns. Standard deviations of the items ranged from .83995 to 1.02689 with one of the sources of concern having standard deviations larger than one. This established that there was less agreement by the female respondents to the level of concern of the item.

Table 20 provides a ranking of the mean scores of the role-based work-related situations that are sources of concern to female respondents.

Table 20

Mean Scores of Role-Based Work-Related Situations as Sources of Concern Reported by Female

Respondents (N=57)

Statement	M(N=57)	SD
Imposing excessively high expectations on myself	3.6316	.93792
Feeling I have to participate in school activities outside of the normal working hours at the expense of my personal time	3.3158	1.07168
Feeling that the progress on my job is not what it should or could be	3.0175	1.00873
Feeling pressure for a better job performance over and above what I think is reasonable	3.0175	1.15714

Table 20 continued on p. 88

Table 20 continued from p. 87

Statement	M (N=57)	SD
Thinking that I will not be able to satisfy the conflicting demands of those who have authority over me	2.9649	1.06846
Feeling that I have too little authority to carry out responsibilities assigned to me	2.8772	1.05340
Feeling that I have too much responsibility delegated to me by my supervisor	2.8596	1.00780
Feeling staff members don't understand my goals and expectations	2.8246	.90874
Knowing I can't get information needed to carry out my job properly	2.7713	1.14981
Not knowing what my supervisor thinks of me, or how he/she evaluates my performance	2.5965	1.17807
Being unclear on just what the scope and responsibilities of my job are	2.4035	1.0135
Feeling that I am not fully qualified to handle my job	2.0877	.95020
Feeling not enough is expected of me by my superiors	1.3684	.61620
Note. 1=never bothers me; 2=rarely bothers me; 3=occasionally bothers me; 4=frequently bothers me; 5=always bothers me		

The mean scores for role-based work-related situations as sources of concern for females ranged from a high of 3.6316—imposing excessively high expectations on myself—to a low of 1.3684, feeling not enough is expected of me by my superiors. The average mean of 2.75 for all role-based work-related situations as sources of concern revealed that female respondents were

rarely bothered by these situations. The overall mean was calculated using the mean of all 13 ASI survey instrument sources of role-based work-related concerns. Standard deviations of the items ranged from .61620 to 1.17807 with nine of the sources of concern having standard deviations larger than one. This established that there was less agreement by the female respondents to the level of concern of the item.

Table 21 provides a ranking of the mean scores of the conflict mediating work-related situations that are sources of concern to female respondents.

Table 21

Mean Scores of Conflict Mediating Work-Related Situations as Sources of Concern Reported by
Female Respondents (N=57)

Statement	M(N=57)	SD
Trying to resolve differences between/among staff members	2.8596	.85437
Trying to resolve parent/school conflicts	2.8246	.82641
Trying to resolve differences between/among students	2.3158	.92886
Trying to resolve differences with my superiors	2.2281	1.01801

Note. 1=never bothers me; 2=rarely bothers me; 3=occasionally bothers me; 4=frequently bothers me; 5=always bothers me

The mean scores for conflict mediating work-related situations as sources of concern for females ranged from a high of 2.8596—trying to resolve parent/school conflicts—to a low of 2.2281, trying to resolve differences with my superiors. The average mean of 2.56 for all the conflict mediating work-related situations as sources of concern revealed that female respondents were rarely bothered by these situations. The overall mean was calculated using the mean of all

four ASI survey instrument sources of conflict mediating work-related concerns. Standard deviations of the items ranged from .82641 to 1.01801 with only one of the sources of concern having standard deviation larger than one. This established that there was less agreement by the female respondents to the level of concern of the item.

Table 22 provides a ranking of the mean scores of the boundary spanning work-related situations that are sources of concern to female respondents.

Table 22

Mean Scores of Boundary Spanning Work-Related Situations as Sources of Concern by Female

Respondents (N=57)

Statement	M(N=57)	SD
Having to make decisions that affect the lives of individual people that I know (colleagues, staff members, students, etc.)	3.2105	.88109
Attempting to meet social expectations (housing, clubs, friends, etc.)	3.0175	.93525
Complying with state, federal, and organizational rules and policies	3.0175	1.06051
Trying to gain public approval and/or financial support for school programs	2.9123	1.03993
Preparing and allocating budget resources	2.4561	.96492
Administering the negotiated contract (grievances, interpretations, etc.)	2.3684	.77545
Being involved in the collective bargaining process	2.1053	.95775
Note. 1=never bothers me; 2=rarely bothers me; 3=occasionally bothers me; 4=frequently bothers me; 5=always bothers me		

The mean scores for boundary spanning work-related situations as sources of concern for females ranged from a high of 3.2105—having to make decisions that affect the lives of individual people (colleagues, staff members, students, etc.)—to a low of 2.1054, being involved in the collective bargaining process. The average mean of 2.73 for all boundary spanning work-related situations as sources of concern revealed that female respondents were rarely bothered by these situations. The overall mean was calculated using the mean of all seven ASI survey instrument sources of boundary spanning work-related concerns. Standard deviations of the items ranged from .77545 to 1.06051 with two of the sources of concern having standard

deviation larger than one. This established that there was less agreement by the female respondents to the level of concern of the item.

Table 23 provides further information related to work-related sources of concern according to role-based, task-based, boundary spanning and conflict mediating. Table 23 ranks by mean score of work- related sources of concern according to role-based, task-based, boundary spanning, and conflict mediating.

Table 23

Mean Scores of 35 Work-Related Situations Categorized by Role-Based, Task-Based, Boundary Spanning, and Conflict Mediating of Female Respondents (N=57)

Category	Mean (N=57)	SD
Task-Based	2.7177	.47384
Role-Based	2.7490	.65619
Conflict Mediating	2.5570	.60691
Boundary Spanning	2.7268	.563608

Note. 1=never bothers me; 2=rarely bothers me; 3=occasionally bothers me; 4=frequently bothers me; 5=always bothers me

The mean scores for work-related situations reported by female respondents categorized by role-based, task-based, boundary spanning, and conflict mediating ranged from 2.5570 to 2.7268. The average mean of 2.69 of all the categories indicates that respondents were rarely bothered by these situations. Overall, the mean of 2.7490 indicated the highest source of concern for female respondents was with role-based situations.

The next survey question was open-ended and asked female participants to list additional sources of work-related sources of concern. Table 24 reports the frequency of other work-related sources of concern reported by female respondents.

Table 24

Other Sources of Concern as Reported by Female Principals (N=14)

Category	Frequency	Valid Percent
Legal	2	14.3
Federal, state, and local mandates	4	28.6
Lack of communication from central office, superintendent, board of education	3	21.4
Lack of Time	1	7.1
Additional meetings/trainings	1	7.1
Outside pressures (media, parents, community expectations)	3	21.4

Information was gathered from an open-ended question about sources of work-related situations as sources of concern of job stresses experienced by female respondent principals. Based on the responses from the respondents, themes were created to best fit the respondents' responses. Respondents' most frequently reported source of concern was federal, state and local mandates (28.6%). Select respondents stated concerns about: "compliance with special education and testing." The second most reported source of concern was lack of communication from central office, superintendent, or Board of Education and outside pressures: media, parents, community expectations (21.4%). Respondents cited such issues as conversations with the superintendent that are unclear about test scores and closing the achievement gap. Also, respondents cited outside pressures such as "the general trend in the media to blame schools for the failure of society."

Table 25 provides further analysis of differences in gender of work-related situations categorized by role-based, task-based, boundary spanning, and conflict mediating. As reported in Table 25, an independent sample *t*-test was utilized for analyzing differences by gender of work-related situations categorized by role-based, task-based, boundary spanning, and conflict mediating.

Table 25

Differences in Gender of Work-Related Situations Categorized by Role-Based, Task-Based, Boundary Spanning, and Conflict Mediating

Category	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	SD Error Difference
Task-Based	.116	-.12131	.07675
Role-Based	.027	-.20889	.09354
Conflict Mediating	.988	.00149	.09633
Boundary Spanning	.007	-.23036	.08459

Levene's Test for Equality of Variances was computed to determine if the two conditions have about the same or different amounts of variability between scores. The Sig (2-Tailed) value revealed there was no statistically significant difference between male and female responses for task-based and conflict mediating categories. However, there was a significant difference between role-based and boundary spanning because the Sig. (2-tailed) value was less than .05. When the value is less than .05 this means the two conditions are significantly different.

Summary of Significant Findings: Research Question 2

Research question two explored the differences in job stresses experienced by male and female secondary school principals in Minnesota. The researcher used the framework of Gmelch and Gate (1988), which identified four causes of stress: role-based, task-based, boundary

spanning, and conflict mediating. The researcher categorized the 35 work-related situations in the ASI into one of Gmelch's and Gate's categories and found task-based work-related situations caused the highest source of stress for both male and female secondary school principals. Specifically, feeling that I have too heavy of a workload, one that I cannot possibly finish during the day, yielded the highest mean of 3.7368 and indicates that female respondents are occasionally bothered by these situations. Conversely, male respondents identified, feelings that meetings take up too much of my time, as the highest source of stress which yielded a mean of 3.3404. This indicates that male respondents are occasionally bothered by these situations.

The initial analysis of data showed that respondents were rarely bothered by the work-related sources of concern as identified by Gmelch's and Gate's framework. In addition, information from an open-ended question about additional sources of concern of job stresses experienced by male and female respondent principals was gathered. This additional information indicated that lack of time was the most frequently reported concern by male principals. However, female respondents indicated federal, state and local mandates were the most frequently reported concern.

Research Question 3

What are the strategies employed by select Minnesota secondary school principals to cope with stress?

The third research question examined in this study was related to the strategies Minnesota secondary school principals use to address the stress they experience as part of their role. Question 17 of the survey instrument focused on ascertaining those strategies respondents found useful in handling the tensions and pressures of their job. The respondents identified the

following strategies: exercise, family, time away from work, professional relationships, other strategies, and no coping strategies. Table 26 displays the frequency of the results.

Table 26

Frequency Distribution of Respondents' Useful Ways of Handling Job Tensions and Pressure of Work (N=200)

Category	Frequency	Percent
Exercise	60	29.6%
Family	45	22.2%
Time away from work	71	35%
Professional Relationships	47	23.2%
Other	46	23.2%
No Coping Strategies	7	3.4%

The most frequent strategy category respondents cited to cope with job stresses was time away from work (N=71, 35%). The second most reported strategy was exercise (N=60, 29.6%). Only seven respondents reported no coping strategies (3.4%).

Summary of Significant Findings: Research Question 3

Research question three explored the strategies employed by select Minnesota secondary school principals to cope with stresses. The researcher used question 17 of the survey instrument, which focused on ascertaining those strategies respondents found useful in handling the tensions and pressures of their job. The respondents identified the following strategies: exercise, family,

time away from work, professional relationships, other strategies, and no coping strategies. The most frequent response of the participants was time away from work.

Research Question 4

The fourth research question examined in this study was related to the different strategies male and female secondary school principals use to address the stress they experience as part of their role. Research question 4 was what are the differences in strategies employed by male and female secondary school principals in Minnesota to cope with job stresses?

Question 17 of the survey instrument focused on ascertaining those strategies respondents found useful in handling the tensions and pressures of their job. The respondents identified the following strategies: exercise, family, time away from work, professional relationships, other strategies, and no coping strategies.

Table 27 displays the female and male respondents' frequency results of useful ways of handling job tensions and pressures of work.

Table 27

Frequency Distribution of Female and Male Respondents Useful Ways of Handling Job Tensions
and Pressure of Work

Category	Female (N=57)	Percentage	Male (N=141)	Percentage
Exercise	17	29.8	42	29.8
Family	14	24.6	31	22.0
Time Away from Work	16	28.1	54	38.3
Professional Associations/Relationships	16	28.1	31	22.0
Other	13	22.8	32	22.7
No Coping Strategies	3	5.3	4	2.8

The most frequent response strategy female respondents cited to cope with job stresses was exercise (N=17, 29.8%) followed by time away from work and professional association/relationships (N=16, 28.1%). Family was the fourth most reported strategy employed by female respondents as a vehicle for treating job tension and stress (N=14, 24.6%). Only three (5.3%) female respondents reported having no coping strategies.

However, the most frequent response strategy male respondents employed to cope with job stresses was time away from work (N=54, 38.3%), followed by exercise (N=42, 29.8%). Male respondents also reported other strategies (N=32, 22.7%) with no further identity provided as useful ways in handling job tensions and pressures of work. Only four (2.8%) male respondents reported having no coping strategies.

Table 28 displays the results of a *t*-test which were used to determine whether or not there was a significant difference in the responses of the male and female respondents on useful ways of dealing with job tensions and pressures of work.

Table 28

Female and Male Response To Useful Ways of Handling Job Tensions and Pressures of Work

Category	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	SD Error Difference
Exercise	.996	.00037	.07215
Family	.697	.02576	.06609
Time Away from Work	.163	-.10228	.07276
Professional Associations/Relationships	.365	.06084	.06698
Other	.987	.00112	.06611
No Coping Strategies	.405	.02426	.02908

Table 28 displays the results of a *t*-test to determine whether or not there was a significant difference in the responses of male and female respondents on useful ways of dealing with job tensions and pressures of work. Levene's Test for Equality of Variances was completed to determine if the two conditions have about the same or different amounts of variability between scores. The Sig (2-Tailed) value revealed there was no statistically significant difference between male and female responses regarding their handling of the tensions and pressures of their job.

Summary of Significant Findings: Research Question 4

Research question four explored the differences in strategies employed by male and female secondary school principals in Minnesota to cope with job stresses. Question 17 of the survey instrument focused on ascertaining those strategies respondents found useful in handling

the tensions and pressures of their job. The respondents identified the following strategies: exercise, family, time away from work, professional relationships, other strategies, and no coping strategies. Exercise was the most identified response of female respondents. However, male respondents identified time away from work as the strategy most used to cope with the stress from their jobs.

Research Question 5

How do job stresses of select Minnesota secondary school principals change as a function of position longevity?

Research question five examined how job stresses of select Minnesota secondary school principals change as a function of position longevity. Question 16 of the survey instrument assisted the researcher in ascertaining the percentage of total stress in the respondents' lives that resulted from their job. Question 12 assisted the researcher in identifying the respondents' years in administration. An ANOVA analysis was conducted to determine if there was a statistically significant difference on how job stresses change as a function of position longevity. The data were analyzed according to the four categories of stress: task-based, role-based, conflict mediating, and boundary spanning.

Table 29 displays the results of the ANOVA.

Table 29

Mean Scores of Job Stresses as a Function of Position Longevity

Stress Category	Range of Years	Range of Years	Range of Years
	1-9 N=68	10-15 N=67	16-38 N=63
Task-Based	2.62	2.69	2.56
Role-Based	2.67	2.66	2.44
Conflict Mediating	2.59	2.51	2.56
Boundary Spanning	2.57	2.58	2.53

Note. 1=never bothers me; 2=rarely bothers me; 3=occasionally bothers me; 4=frequently bothers me; 5=always bothers me

The mean scores for work-related situations as categorized by range of years in the respondent's position ranged from 2.44 to 2.69. The mean of all the categories was 2.58 and revealed that respondents are rarely bothered by these situations. Overall, the mean of 2.69 for task-based work-related situation in the 10-15 range of years caused the highest source of concern.

As reported in Table 30, an ANOVA was conducted to determine whether or not there were significant differences in the responses of participants based on position longevity. Table 30 presents the results.

Table 30

Job Stress as a Function of Position Longevity

Stress Category	Sig
Task-Based	.306
Role-Based	.053
Conflict Mediating	.764
Boundary Spanning	.875

An ANOVA is the analysis of the variance of values in comparing one group to another. Because the Sig value was greater than .05 in all categories, there was no significant difference found between stress and position longevity. Because the Sig value was greater than .05 no other post hoc tests were conducted.

Summary of Significant Findings: Research Question 5

Research question five explored how job stresses of select Minnesota secondary school principals change as a function of position longevity. Question 16 of the survey instrument assisted the researcher in ascertaining the percentage of total stress in the respondents' lives that resulted from their job. An ANOVA analysis was conducted to determine if there was a statistically significant difference on how job stresses changes as a function of longevity.

The initial analysis of data showed that there was no significant difference between stress and position longevity.

Summary

Data from 200 principals were analyzed to examine stresses and coping strategies reported by select Minnesota secondary school principals. Principals' responses were analyzed to determine the principals' major sources of stress, the differences in job stresses experienced by male and female secondary school principals, the strategies principals use to cope with stress, the differences in strategies used by female and male principals to cope with stress, and how job stresses change as a function of position longevity. Using analysis of variance calculations, demographic variables, stress factors and coping strategies were analyzed to determine statistically significant relationships.

Chapter five presents the findings of the study, explains the relationships of these findings to the current review of literature, draws conclusions and offers recommendations on stress factors that select Minnesota secondary principals have experienced; coping strategies that principals may employ, and recommendations for further study.

Chapter V: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Study Purpose

The purpose of the study was to examine job related stresses and subsequent coping strategies to address stresses reported by select Minnesota secondary school principals. Effective principals lead effective schools, yet burnout can impact the organization and an administrator's leadership abilities. It is believed valuable to identify the sources of stress and coping strategies, in part, because of the changing role of school principals.

The study was intended to gather and analyze data regarding select Minnesota secondary school principals' job stresses, the relationship of those job stresses to one another, and the strategies used to cope with those stresses. Furthermore, the study examined the differences in job stresses experienced by male and female secondary school principals and the strategies they used to cope with those job stresses. Finally, this study examined whether or not the job stresses of school principals change as a function of position longevity. The data were analyzed and findings organized according to each research question.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study:

1. What are the major sources of job stress reported by select Minnesota secondary school principals?
2. What are differences in the job stresses experienced by male and female secondary school principals in Minnesota?
3. What are the strategies employed by select Minnesota secondary school principals to cope with job stresses?

4. What are the differences in strategies employed by male and female secondary school principals in Minnesota to cope with job stresses?
5. How do job stresses of select Minnesota secondary school principals change as a function of position longevity?

Data Gathering and Analysis

This study identified 581 Minnesota secondary school principals who were listed on the membership database of the Minnesota Secondary School Principals (MASSP). All participants received an email from the researcher explaining the purpose of the study and providing a link to the Administrative Stress Index (ASI) survey questions (Appendix B). The Administrative Stress Index (ASI) consists of 35 stress-related questions and a series of demographic questions. In addition, respondents were asked to respond to an open-ended question in which they were to list strategies they found useful in responding to job pressures and other job-related situations with which they were bothered (Gmelch, 1982) (Appendix A). The principals who responded to the survey totaled 223 or a 38% response rate. After examining participants' responses, 200 were determined to be valid.

Analysis of data was conducted at the St. Cloud State Office of Statistical Analysis using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Using SPSS, Chronbach's Alpha was computed to .917 for the total scale. An alpha value of greater than .9 affirms that the sample has high internal consistency and reliability.

The data were analyzed using frequency distributions for demographic variables. Mean scores were calculated to determine sources of concern, and Pearson product-moment correlations were calculated to determine significant relationships among research question variables. Appropriate t-tests and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) were used to

determine significant relationships between sources of stress and strategies for coping with stress with consideration of specific demographic variables. Finally, open-ended comments from respondents concerning the sources of stress and strategies for coping with stress were reported by major theme and frequency.

This chapter reports the summary of findings and conclusions formulated in this study. The information was organized and reported by research question. Recommendations for further study are also included.

STUDY FINDINGS AND LITERATURE

Research Question 1

What are the major sources of job stress reported by select Minnesota secondary school principals?

Principals must understand the stressors of the job in order to achieve successful leadership (Sarros, 1988). Work-related situations as sources of concern for respondents was measured by using the Administrative Survey Index (Gmelch, 1982) utilizing a Likert scale with a range of 1 (never really bothers me) to 5 (always bothers me). Mean scores for potential sources of concern were generated. Through an open-ended question, respondents were provided with the opportunity to list additional sources of concern. The researcher organized the open-ended comments and reported the results by major theme and frequency.

A mean score of 2.59 was recorded on responses received from responding Minnesota secondary school principals on 35 work-related situations cited as sources of concern. Minnesota secondary school principals were rarely bothered by these situations. Of the 35 work-related situations cited as sources of concern, feeling that I have too heavy a workload, one that I cannot possibly finish during the normal work day ranked highest at 3.4286 or in the range, occasionally

bothers me. Previous studies of work-related situations cited as sources of concern reported similar results (Gmelch and Gate, 1998; Whitaker, 1995; Tomic and Tomic, 2008; Heibert and Mendaglio, 1998; Whitaker, 1996; Okoroma and Okah, 2007; Phillips et al., 2007; Brimm, 2001; Duke, 1998) with principals feeling that they have too heavy of a workload to accomplish during the normal work day.

Respondents also noted that meetings take up too much of their time. This yielded a mean of 3.3596 or in the occasionally bothers me range. In addition, respondents noted the following work related situations as sources of concern that occasionally bother them:

- Imposing excessively high expectations on myself
- Complying with state, federal, and organizational rules and policies
- Feeling that I have to participate in school activities outside of normal working hours at the expense of my personal time
- Having to make decisions that affect the lives of individual people that I know (colleagues, staff members, students, etc.)
- Trying to complete reports and other paperwork on time.

Previous studies of work-related situations had similar results (Wax and Hales, 1987; Gmelch and Gates, 1998; Gmelch, 1988; Kottkamp and Mansfield, 1985; Okoroma and Okah, 2007; Wells, 2013; Tomic and Tomic, 2008; Heibert and Mendaglio, 1988; Brimm, 2001; Whitaker, 1996; Duke, 1988; Phillips et al., 2007) to the above.

In Gmelch and Gate's (1998) framework, the authors identified four causes of stress: role-based, task-based, boundary spanning, and conflict mediating stress.

- Role-based stress: administrator's beliefs and attitudes about their role in the school.

- Task-based stress: the day to day operations of the school which may include staff and telephone interruptions, participating in activities outside of school hours, too heavy of a workload, meetings, writing reports, memos, and other communications.
- Boundary spanning stress: develops from outside conditions such as pressure to gain public support.
- Conflict-mediating stress: resolving differences with and between students, parents, and superiors (p. 147).

In the study, statistical analysis revealed that there was a strong relationship between task-based and role-based stresses. Further, Whitaker (1995) stated that role conflict and ambiguity, increased workload, insufficient status and recognition within the organization and lack of job challenges were predictors of burnout caused by stress.

According to Carolyn Wells (2013), the job of the principal is “a job too big for one person.” Wells (2013) cited the work of Williamson and Campbell (1987) who believed the four major stresses for principals were management of time, relations with supervisors, relations with subordinates and matters of finance. Wells also cited the work of Bailey, Fillos, and Kelly (1987), who identified the top stressors for principals as resolving school conflict, making important decisions that affect the lives of others, and compliance with state and federal mandates. In this study, respondents reported that lack of time was a source of concern as well as federal, state, and local mandates.

Research Question 2

What are the major differences in job stresses experienced by male and female secondary school principals in Minnesota?

Torelli and Gmelch (1993) stated that gender differences can influence and affect interactions among the stages of the stress cycle. Gender may also affect an individual's perceptions of stressors and create different responses (Torelli and Gmelch, 1993).

In this study, work-related situations cited as sources of concern by male and female respondents were measured using the Administrative Survey Index (Gmelch, 1982), employing a Likert scale range 1 (never really bothers me) to 5 (always bothers me). Mean scores for potential sources of concern were computed. Through the use of an open-ended question, male and female respondents were provided opportunities to list additional sources of concern. The researcher organized the comments and reported the results by major theme and frequency.

The 35 work-related situations identified as sources of concern by male respondents yielded a mean score of 2.55. Thus, male respondents stated they were rarely bothered by these situations. Of the 35 work-related situations cited as sources of concern, male respondents identified their highest concern (3.3404) was that meetings take up too much of their time.

The 35 work-related situations cited as sources of concern by female respondents yielded a mean score of 3.7368. Thus, female respondents stated they were occasionally bothered by these situations. Of the 35 work-related situations cited as sources of concern, female respondents identified their highest concern (3.7368) was feeling they had too heavy a workload, one that they could not possibly finish during the normal work day. Task-based work-related situations cited as sources of stress yielded the highest mean (2.7177) for female respondents.

Task-based work-related situations cited as sources of stress yielded the highest mean score for both female and male respondents. Task-based work-related situations include the day to day operations of the school, including staff and telephone interruptions, participating in activities outside of school hours, too heavy a workload, meetings, writing reports, memos, and

other communications (Gmelch and Gates, 1998 p. 147). In Heibert and Mendaglio's (1998) study, principals also cited frequent interruptions by other people or phone calls, supervising/coordinating school activities, keeping up with written communications, having responsibilities with insufficient authority, excessive work loads, and living up to their own high expectations as stress factors. In the study, there was a significant difference between role-based and boundary-spanning work-related situations cited as sources of stress by female and male respondents.

Role-based stress refers to administrators' beliefs and attitudes about their roles in the school (Gmelch and Gates, 1998 p.147). Female respondents mean score (2.7490) for role-based work-related situations was higher than male respondents ($M=2.5401$). Kochran et al. (1999) stated that men and women differ in their view of the role of the principal. Women viewed the tasks before them in a more global manner while men approached tasks more linear (Kochran et al., 1999). For example, women spoke about "providing leadership in the instructional area," and men spoke of "having knowledge of the curriculum" (Kochran et al., 1999). Females reported their role as being responsible for leading and becoming an effective leader (Kochran et al., 1999). Conversely, men reported their role as being responsible for management and control rather than leadership (Kochran et al., 1999).

Boundary spanning stress develops from outside conditions such as pressure to gain public support (Gmelch and Gates, 1998, p. 147). Female respondents' mean score (2.7268) for boundary spanning work-related situations was higher than male respondents ($M=2.4965$). In Sachs and Blackmore's (1998) study, they found that women reported the expectations of the community made a woman's job more difficult. It was reported that women faced sexist attitudes

regarding the manner in which they were expected to behave and the way they expected to be treated (Sachs and Blackmore, 1998).

Research Question 3

What are the strategies employed by select Minnesota secondary school principals to cope with job stresses?

When principals are subjected to long-term, continuous, moderately high to high stress with no expectation of relief, they may adjust their self-concept, redefine job roles, develop mental problems, or may develop physical problems (Wax and Hales, 1987). The methods (strategies) employed by select Minnesota secondary school principals to cope with job stresses were measured by using an open-ended question on the survey instrument which asked the participants to identify the strategies they found useful in coping with the tensions and pressures of their jobs. The researcher reviewed the comments and categorized respondents' comments into the following categories: exercise, family, time away from work, professional relationships, other strategies, and no coping strategies.

Of the six categories employed by the researcher, the most frequently reported strategy used to cope with job stresses was time away from work. Tomic and Tomic (2008) stated a cause of burnout is the loss of life, meaning that transcends personal interests of satisfaction and well-being. They stated it is important to seek existential fulfillment or finding fulfillment in life (Tomic and Tomic, 2008). Work is only one aspect of existential meaning. Someone who is incapable of making a clear distinction between self and their environment and who has lived for others, someone who fails to connect work with self-transcendence may experience work as a burden and may also suffer from a lack of job satisfaction, exhaustion, and cynicism (Tomic and Tomic, 2008).

Respondents' second most reported strategy to cope with job stress was exercise. Wax and Hales (1984) stated it might be helpful to implement wellness programs to examine one's approach to stressful events. In Hiebert and Mendaglio's (1998) study, they found most principals practice few skills that demonstrate success for controlling stress. However, some principals used meditation, exercise, or chose to focus on the positive (Hiebert and Mendaglio, 1998). Wells (2013) suggested integrating mindfulness meditation, which includes listening and being aware of what is being heard. It may also include walking, sitting, lying down, observing the mind for thoughts, being aware of breath patterns, and gentle yoga (Wells, 2013).

Research Question 4

What are the differences in strategies employed by male and female secondary school principals in Minnesota to cope with job stresses?

Greenglass et al. (1990) found the relationship between work stress and burnout differed between women and men. Women handled stress and burnout by having a support network of family, friends, and spouse (Greenglass et al., 1990). Men depended on support at work through a supervisor, co-worker, or a subordinate (Greenglass et al., 1990). However, the findings in this study do not support the literature. In this study, there is no statistical significance in the strategies employed by male and female respondents.

Research Question 5

How do job stresses of select Minnesota secondary school principals change as a function of position longevity?

While research does support that job stresses change as a function of position longevity (Jackson and Rothmann, 2005; Whitaker, 1995), Sarros (1988) said there is no significant difference in burnout of administrators in relation to the total number of years served as an

educator or as an administrator. The findings in the study also support that there is no statistical significance in the changing of job stress as a function of increasing longevity in the position whether dealing with task-based, role-based, conflict mediating, and boundary-spanning work related sources of job stress.

Limitations of the Study

Roberts defines limitations as, “particular features of your study that you know may negatively affect the results or your ability to generalize” (Roberts, 2010, p.165). The following are limitations for this study:

- The study was voluntary and limited by the number surveys completed.
- The honesty of the respondents in answering survey questions could not be assured.
- The study was conducted only in the state of Minnesota which may not represent the perceptions of secondary school principals in other states.
- The study did not include school administrators other than principals such as assistant principals, superintendents and other central office staff.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations for the Field

Based on the research findings and the conclusions drawn from the data, the following recommendations are offered regarding principal stress and the coping strategies used by responding principals to cope with the amount of stress they experience.

1. Understand Role Complexity

- In the study, principals reported they are rarely or occasionally stressed by work-related situations that are sources of concern as identified in the survey instrument. However, other research literature concludes different findings. The

findings support that principals do experience a high level of stress; therefore, it is imperative principals understand the complexities of the principalship.

2. Create a Support Network

- The majority of respondents in this study reported they were 45 years of age or younger. The research states that principals between the ages of 35-44 reported a higher rate of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization than any other age group (Whitaker, 1995). Whitaker (1996) stated emotional exhaustion is a significant problem as principals face increasing demands and responsibilities. As principals face mid-life transitions, it is imperative that they develop a support network, which may include family, friends, or colleagues.

3. Employ Time Allocation Strategies

- A source of concern for respondents in this study was the feeling of having an excessively heavy workload, one that could not possibly be accomplished in a day. Future professional development training for principals would be encouraged to include strategies for time allocation focused on helping principals prioritize the daily loads.

Recommendations for Further Study

Based on the research findings and the conclusions drawn from the data, the following recommendations are offered as potential areas of further research:

- One significant limitation of the study was the exclusion of other school administrators, including assistant principals, superintendents and other central office staff. A further study could be undertaken to compare the stress levels of

administrators in varied administrative positions and offer recommendations based on the data received from the study.

- In a follow-up study, it may be valuable to compare the stress levels of principals who serve in schools of varied sizes.
- This study could be replicated in other states to examine principals' stress levels as well as strategies used to cope with the changing role of the principalship.
- This study could be replicated with elementary principals in Minnesota. The results could be used to compare the different stresses that principals experience by school or organizational levels.
- In the future, it would be valuable to survey principal respondents throughout the calendar year to determine whether or not the types and volume of stress experienced by principals varies at different times in the school year.
- Further research may be warranted regarding role-based and boundary spanning sources of job stress as a function of gender. Statistically, there was a significant difference between the responses of female and male respondents on role-based and boundary spanning sources of job stress.

Summary

The purpose of the study was to examine stresses and coping strategies reported by select Minnesota secondary school principals. The study identified the sources of stress and coping strategies of select Minnesota secondary school principals. Findings from the study reported that overall principals were rarely bothered by the work-related situations as identified by the Administrative Stress Index. However, the research literature does suggest that principals face large amounts of stress, and it is imperative they develop strategies to cope with stressful

situations that occur. Effective coping strategies will aid principals in avoiding emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment; this in turn will reduce burnout and maintain efficacy on a professional organizational manner.

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Appendices

This research is being conducted by Trish Perry to satisfy the requirements of a Doctoral Degree in Educational Administration and Leadership at St. Cloud State University.

1. School administrators have indentified the following 35 work-related situations as sources of concern. It's possible that some of these situations bother you more than others. How much are you bothered by each of the situations listed below? Please check the appropriate response.

	Rarely or Never Bothers Me		Occasionally Bothers Me		Frequently Bothers Me
	1	2	3	4	5
Being interrupted frequently by telephone calls	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Supervising and coordinating the tasks of many people	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Feeling staff members don't understand my goals and expectations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Feeling that I am not fully qualified to handle my job	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	Rarely or Never Bothers Me		Occasionally Bothers Me		Frequently Bothers Me
	1	2	3	4	5
Knowing I can't get information needed to carry out my job properly	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Thinking that I will not be able to satisfy the conflicting demands of those who have authority over me	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Trying to resolve differences between/among students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Feeling not enough is expected of me by my superiors	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Having my work frequently interrupted by staff members who want to talk	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Imposing excessively high expectations on myself	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Feeling pressure for better job performance over and above what I think is reasonable	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Writing memos, letters and other communications	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Trying to resolve differences with my superiors	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Speaking in front of groups	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Attempting to meet social expectations (housing, clubs, friends, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	Rarely or Never Bothers Me		Occassionally Bothers Me		Frequently Bothers Me
	1	2	3	4	5
Not knowing what my supervisor thinks of me, or how he/she evaluates my performance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Having to make decisions that affect the lives of individual people that I know (colleagues, staff members, students, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Feeling I have to participate in school activities outside of the normal working hours at the expense of my personal time	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Feeling that I have too much responsibility delegated to me by my supervisor	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Trying to resolve parent/school conflicts	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Preparing and allocating budget resources	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Feeling that I have too little authority to carry out responsibilities assigned to me	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Handling student discipline problems	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Being involved in the collective bargaining process	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Evaluating staff members' performance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Feeling that I have too heavy a work load, one that I cannot possibly finish during the normal work day	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	Rarely or Never Bothers Me		Occasionally Bothers Me		Frequently Bothers Me
	1	2	3	4	5
Complying with state, federal, and organizational rules and policies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Feeling that the progress on my job is not what it should or could be	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Administering the negotiated contract (grievances, interpretations, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Being unclear on just what the scope and responsibilities of my job are	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Feeling that meetings take up too much of my time	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Trying to complete reports and other paper work on time	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Trying to resolve differences between/among staff members	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Trying to influence my immediate supervisor's actions and decisions that affect me	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Trying to gain public approval and/or financial support for school programs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

2. Other situations about your job that bother you

May I please have the following information about you and your district/school?

3. Age

4. Position

5. Which one administrative category best describes your area of responsibility?

6. Are you a full time administrator?

7. Size of district by ADM:

8. Number of people you supervise/evaluate:

Classified

Certificated

9. County in which your district is located?

10. Sex

☐ Male

☐ Female

11. Years in present position:

12. Years in administration

13. Hours worked per week:

14. Hours of physical exercise per week:

15. Physical health

	1 Poor	2	3	4	5 Excellent
Current physical health:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

16. What percentage of total stress in your life results from your job?

17. Recognizing that school administration is a demanding occupation, what ways have you personally found useful in handling the tensions and pressures of your job?

Appendix B: Survey Solicitation Email

Dear colleagues:

I would like to ask your help in taking a short survey regarding principal stress factors and coping strategies. The survey will take you no more than 10 minutes to complete. I am conducting this research for my Doctoral Degree through St. Cloud State University. The purpose of this study is to examine stress factors and coping strategies reported by Minnesota secondary school principals.

I truly appreciate you taking the time to complete the survey and I look forward to sharing the results with you.

Please follow this link:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/FD33GMF>

Thank you,

Trish Perry, Principal

New London-Spicer Middle School

MASSP State Coordinator

Doctoral Candidate St. Cloud State University

--

Minnesota Association of Secondary School Principals

1667 Snelling Avenue N, Suite C-100

St. Paul, MN 55108

651-999-7333 phone

651-999-7331 fax

Appendix C: ASI Permission

Trish Perry

From: Walt's USF <whgmelch@usfca.edu>
Sent: Sunday, October 26, 2014 1:13 PM
To: Trish Perry
Subject: Re: Administrative Index Survey

Hi Trish!

I am pleased to share the ASI with you. Please indicate the copyright and send me a summary of the results. I apologize for this short email as I am off to Asia for to weeks.

Best of luck!

Walt

Sent from my iPhone

On Oct 25, 2014, at 10:10 AM, Trish Perry <PerryT@nls.k12.mn.us> wrote:

Dear Dr. Gmelch,

My name is Trish Perry and I serve as a principal in a small west central Minnesota middle school. I am currently working on completing my doctoral degree at St. Cloud State University. My topic of interest is principal stress factors. I have enjoyed reading your research which happens to be a large part of my review of literature in studying this topic.

I am interested in using your Administrative Stress Index and hope to seek approval from you to use this as my survey instrument. My goal is to use this as a basis to survey secondary school principals in the state of Minnesota. I would be happy to share my results with you upon completion of my doctoral degree which I anticipate to be in spring of 2016.

Sincerely,

Trish M. Perry, Principal
 New London-Spicer Middle School
 101 4th Ave SW
 New London, MN 56273
 320-354-2252 ext 2401

Appendix D: MASSP Permission for Solicitation

From: Dave Adney [mailto:dadney@mail.massp.org]
Sent: Friday, June 05, 2015 9:37 AM
To: Trish Perry
Subject: Re: Survey

Trish,

This looks very engaging and the data you collect will be of great use to MASSP.

We support this survey and the collection of data from our members and will assist in any way possible.

Are you thinking of engaging colleagues in data collection at the Summer Conference?

Dave

 On 6/5/15 8:31 AM, "Trish Perry" <PerryT@nls.k12.mn.us> wrote:

Hi Dave,

Below is a link to my survey. The title of my dissertation is "A study of principal stress factors and coping strategies." The purpose of the study is to examine stress and coping strategies of select Minnesota secondary school principals. There is limited information available about the stresses experienced by principals and the strategies they use to cope with stress, therefore, further research is warranted.

The research questions that will be addressed in the study are:

- } What are the major sources of job stress reported by select Minnesota secondary school principals?
 - } What are differences in the job stresses experienced by male and female secondary school principals in Minnesota?
 - } What are the methods (strategies) employed by select Minnesota secondary school principals to cope with job stresses?
 - } What are the differences in strategies to cope with job stresses employed by male and female secondary school principals in Minnesota?
 - } How do job stresses of select Minnesota secondary school principals change as a function of position longevity?
- I will be more than willing to share my results with MASSP membership.

Thanks,

Trish M. Perry, Principal
 New London-Spicer Middle School
 101 4th Ave SW
 New London, MN 56273
 320-354-2252 ext 2401